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Pro Football

2010 Preview

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GMC
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Editor's Letter

You're reading this, so I know two things: You love pro football and you respect Athlon's publications. Now I'll make a guess: If you've ever been to AthlonSports.com, it wasn't to read about pro football.

OK, maybe you did — those page views came from somewhere (and not all from my mom). But the fact is, despite publishing a *Pro Football* magazine that always provides a marvelous preview of the coming season, Athlon hasn't provided loads of pro football content online over the years. Athlon's proud 43-year history is steeped most heavily in college football, and the website has reflected that. So while the college game has been previewed and analyzed to the hilt, our digital pro football coverage has been more hit-and-miss.

That's about to change.

For the last several months, Athlon's finest editorial and technical folks have been working like mad to produce an entirely new AthlonSports.com. It will look different. It will operate differently. And it will offer more — much more — across the board, from greater customization features to more timely news and analysis to, yes, a greater abundance of stories on the NFL. Finally.

See, I love pro football. I love the majesty of a Peyton Manning pass that arcs just above the outstretched arms of one defender, just under the reach of another and into the hands of a perfectly positioned Dallas Clark. The millisecond it takes Chris Johnson to slice through a tiny hole in the line and burst to the end zone. The athleticism and ball skills that make it almost pointless for a quarterback to even consider throwing toward Darrelle Revis. The anticipation before the snap when you wonder whether Jared Allen will circle wide and beat his man with speed or simply bull-rush the guy straight back into the passer. I love a crisp, cool Sunday with the sun shining above, and I love it even more when it snows. I love the X's and O's, and I love the precision required of 11 guys working together to make a play work. I love the buildup to the draft and the drama of final roster cuts. I love weeks that are so important, they require capital letters. When pro football is on, even the commercials are better.

So it killed me not to be providing the kind of NFL coverage I certainly expect when I go to a leading sports website. But like I said, that's changing. And soon.

Here's what I'd like you to do: After you've spent some time reading this magazine and getting up to speed on the NFL, shoot me an e-mail at *mike.nahrstedt@athlonsports.com*. Let me know what you think of the magazine. Some of what you see in these pages was suggested by readers last year, so you have a real opportunity to influence the content.

When I reply to your e-mail — and I will reply — I'll let you know when AthlonSports.com is set to relaunch (or that it already has, depending on when you contact me). And all I ask is that you check it out. Explore the new site and see how it works and what's there, particularly on the NFL. It will be a vast improvement over what you might have experienced at AthlonSports.com in the past.

As a pro football fanatic, I can't wait.

Mike Nahrstedt, Deputy Editor

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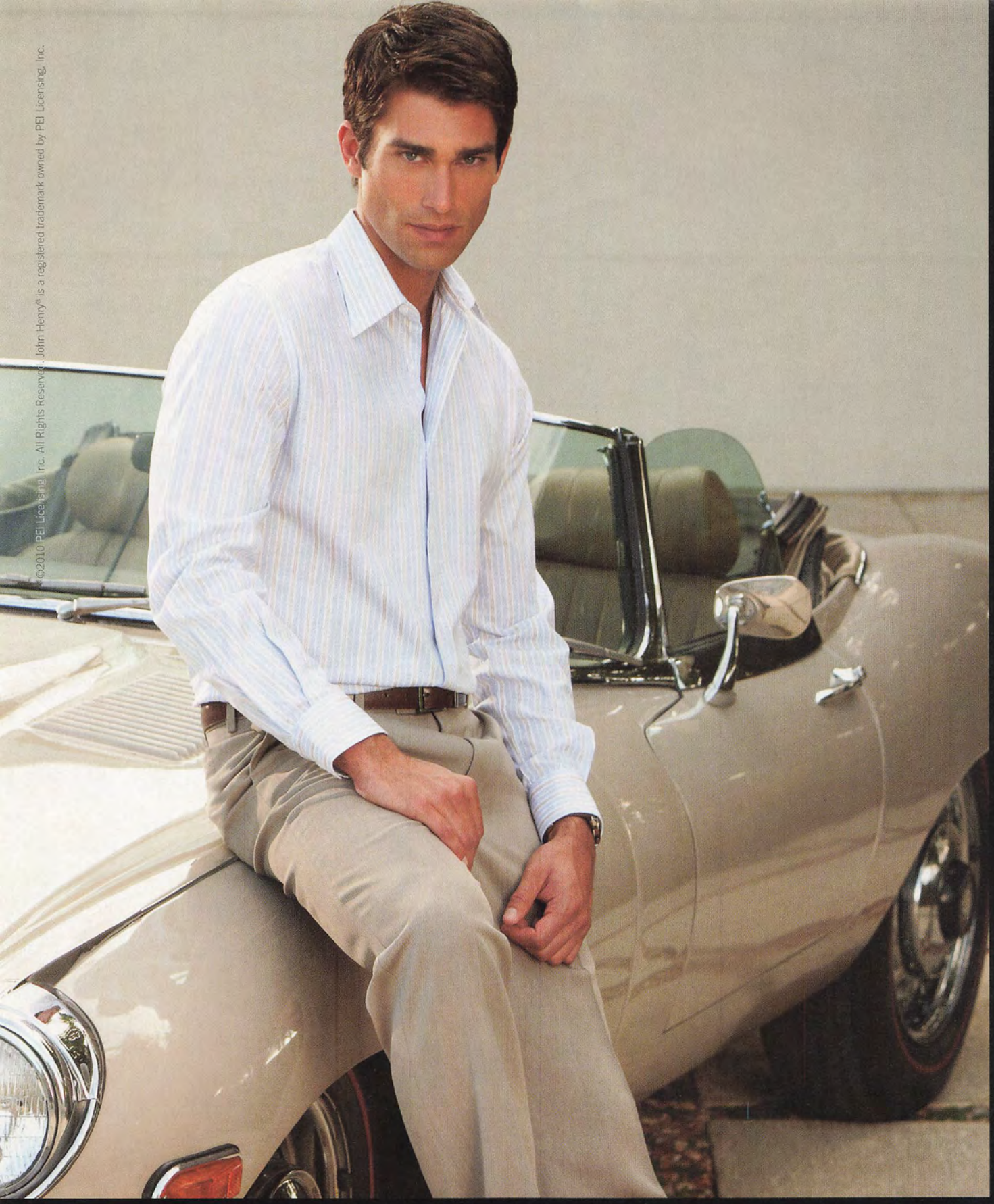

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Athlon® Sports™ PRO FOOTBALL

2010 EDITION

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CONTRIBUTORS

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Contributing Writers: Jim Armstrong, Kent Babb, Phil Barber, Scott Bordow, Michael Bradley, Dan Brown, Jason Butt, Rich Cimini, Bill Coats, Gene Duffey, Jeff Duncan, Gary Estwick, Chuck Finder, Scott Fowler, Kevin Goheen, Bruce Herman, Paul Hickey, Greg Johns, Bob LeGere, Rick Maese, Shalise Manza Young, Patrick McManamon, Jim Nasella, John Niyo, Dan Pompei, Leo Roth, Chip Scoggins, Phil Sheridan, Ethan J. Skolnick, Rick Stroud, Ralph Vacchiano, Jason Wilde, Charean Williams, Aaron Wilson, Bernie Wilson, Phillip B. Wilson

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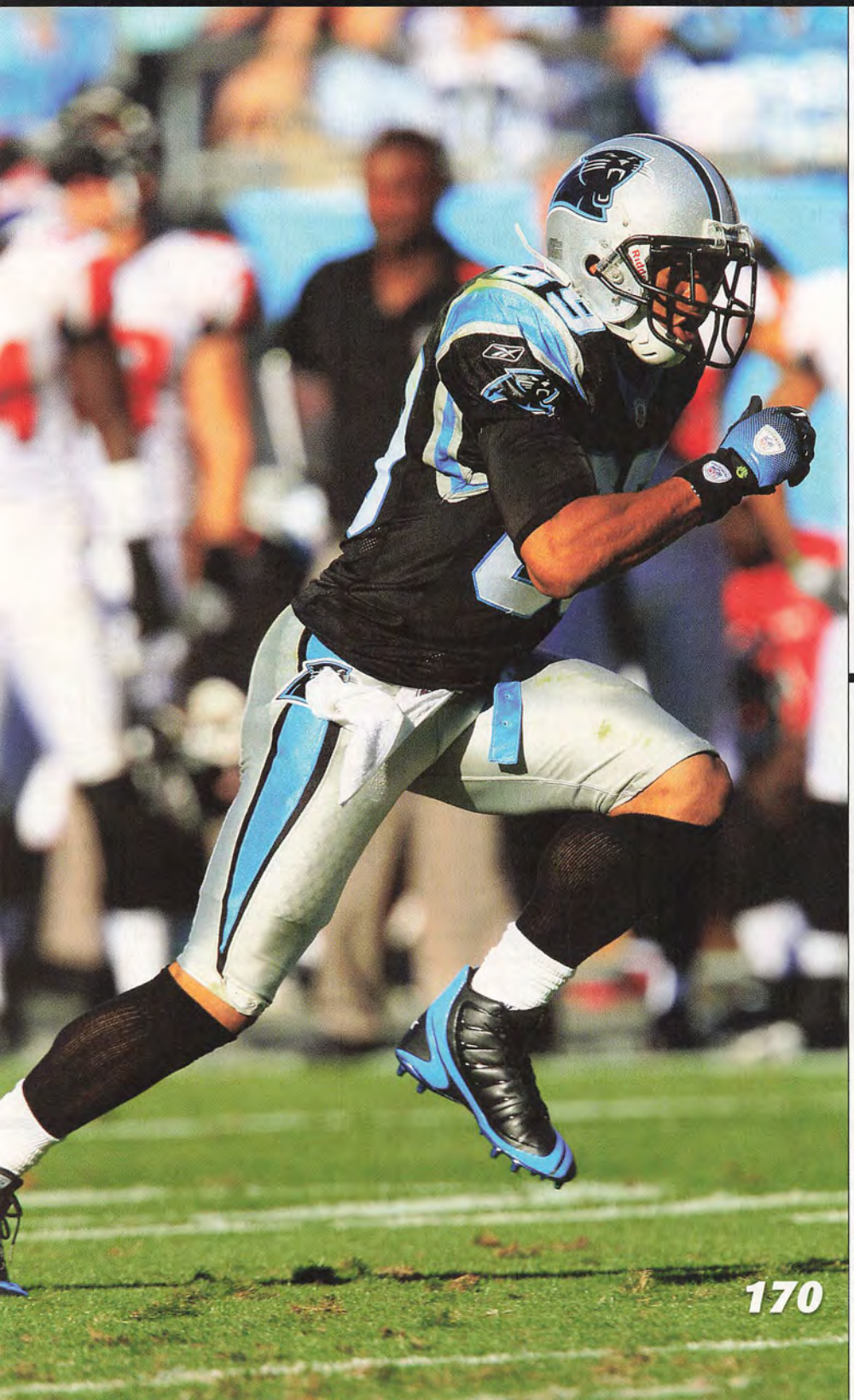
Athlon® Sports™ PRO FOOTBALL

2010 EDITION

TEAM PREVIEWS



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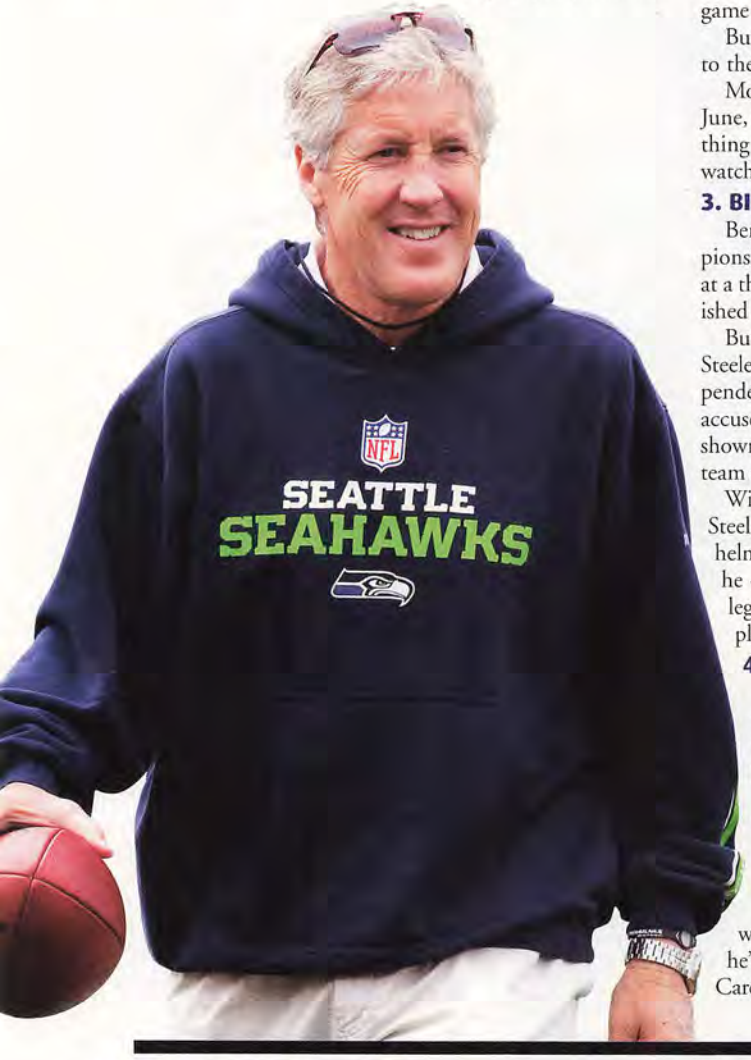
5 Things to Watch

by Ralph Vacchiano



1. THE MOTHER OF ALL SUPER BOWL HANGOVERS

History is working against the New Orleans Saints anyway because only one team in the last 10 years (the 2004 New England Patriots) reached the Super Bowl the year after winning it all. Five of the previous 11 champs didn't even make the playoffs the following season.

It might be hard to see the same thing happening to the Saints, who dazzled with their rejuvenated defense and explosive offense. But consider this: They lost their last three regular-season games. They nearly lost the two before that streak began. And their last two playoff games turned on a late interception. They were not exactly an unstoppable juggernaut in December and January.

And, well, if you've ever been to Bourbon Street — especially around Mardi Gras — you can relate to the feeling the Saints are likely to have after the partying is over. The Saints spent the offseason celebrating with an entire championship-starved region. It will be hard — if not impossible — to re-create that Bayou magic again.

2. THE MAGNET PULLING MIKE HOLMGREN TO THE SIDELINE

The Browns gave the keys to their football operation to Mike Holmgren so he could restore some credibility and respectability to their organization. So what does he do? He retains the coach (Eric Mangini) who helped create much of the current chaos. A surprise? Sure, but that's what a season-ending, four-game winning streak will do for you.

But how long will the marriage last? And when it ends, will Holmgren return to the sideline for the first time in two years?

More than a few NFL people believe that while Holmgren, who turns 62 in June, is willing to give Mangini a chance, he's also itching to coach again. One thing is for sure: As soon as the current winning streak ends, the Holmgren watch in Cleveland will be on.

3. BIG BEN'S PROBLEMS

Ben Roethlisberger has led the Pittsburgh Steelers to two Super Bowl championships, and if his team can stay healthy it might have been poised for a run at a third. Injuries derailed them last year, especially on defense, yet they still finished 9–7. They could have been one of the AFC favorites this year.

But Roethlisberger has become more of a distraction than an asset to the Steelers. He'll miss at least the first four games, possibly more, after being suspended for violating the NFL's personal-conduct policy after twice being accused of sexual assault. Dating back to his motorcycle accident in 2006, he has shown a penchant for, at best, poor off-field decisions. Even the owners of his team and fans in his city no longer seem to be completely on his side.

Will it matter on the field? Yes, for at least a quarter of the season, when the Steelers will have to stay afloat with Byron Leftwich or Dennis Dixon at the helm. But who knows what Roethlisberger will be when he gets back, and if he — or his teammates — are distracted by the constant questions and his legal troubles. It's never a good thing when a franchise's most important player has things other than football to clutter his mind.

4. PETE CARROLL'S THIRD NFL TRY

Because he didn't last long, everyone forgets that Pete Carroll was a pretty good NFL coach. He had just one season with the Jets (and went 6–10) but went to the playoffs twice in three seasons with New England (1997-99) and never finished worse than 8–8.

Still, it was a surprise to see him give up the college job of a lifetime at USC, where in nine seasons he won 97 games and two national championships, to take over the Seahawks, a franchise with an awful defense and major questions at quarterback and running back.

The Seahawks, though, appear willing to give him some time, which will help him considering he faced stiffer competition in the Pac-10 than he'll face in the NFC West. With Kurt Warner now retired and the Arizona Cardinals hemorrhaging star players, the division is wide open.

5. THE NEXT STEP FOR VINCE YOUNG

Vince Young reclaimed his starting spot and his NFL career last season with a remarkable 10-game stretch in which he rescued the Titans from an 0–6 start and led them to an 8–2 finish. He completed 58.7 percent of his passes for 1,879 yards and only seven interceptions. And in a few games — such as his remarkable 387-yard performance against the Cardinals — he showed everyone why, in 2006, he was the third overall pick in the draft.

But with the starting job come expectations and pressure. Last year it was simply a triumph that his head was screwed on straight enough for him to help his team win. Now he must do more. He threw for less than 200 yards in six of his 10 starts. And 10 touchdown passes in 10 games won't do it, either.

He showed last year that some in the NFL had left him for dead too quickly. Now he must prove his resurrection was real.

Rod Mar

5 Bold Predictions

Rafael Suanes/US Presswire

1. DONOVAN McNABB WILL GET HIS REVENGE (SORT OF)

Dan Snyder has always liked to throw cash around, but he has never thrown it in a better direction than at Mike Shanahan, a coach who in time will build an actual respectable organization. Still, even he was undermanned and likely to be overwhelmed in the rough NFC East until the Skins stole Donovan McNabb.

The still hard-to-believe decision by the Eagles to give McNabb away inside the division, all so they could go with the untested Kevin Kolb at quarterback, might eventually work out for the Eagles. But in the short term the advantage goes to Washington with McNabb, one of the most underrated quarterbacks of this generation. The Redskins lost seven games by a touchdown or less last year and two more by 10 points or less. They were also 26th in the NFL in scoring. Both stats will change quickly with McNabb running the show.

It won't be enough to get an underwhelming team into the playoffs. But it should be good for two emotional wins over Philly, and enough to bury the Eagles in the NFC East basement.

2. THE LIONS WILL WIN A ROAD GAME (BUT NOT A DIVISION GAME)

Do you remember where you were on Oct. 28, 2007? A glorious day in Detroit Lions history. They beat the Bears, 16–7, in Chicago that day on their way to a 6–2 start to their season.

Since then? Nothing but ugly. The Lions are 3–37 in the last two-and-a-half seasons, including an 0–20 mark on the road and an 0–15 mark in the NFC North.

What inspires the notion the Lions will end one, but not both, of the streaks? Well, they are adding talent under coach Jim Schwartz and they have a quarterback (Matthew Stafford), so there is hope. And the road schedule includes a couple of soft spots — Buffalo and Tampa Bay — where a win, in the right conditions, could happen.

The division, though, is too strong for a breakthrough there. The Packers and Vikings are loaded for a playoff run, and the Bears are only a couple of steps behind. The division streak will likely reach 0–21.

3. THE RAVENS WILL RULE THE AFC

The Ravens have always had the defense to be considered an elite team in the NFL, and the last two years they've had the running game to go with it. They even have an emerging star at quarterback in Joe Flacco, who has been a pleasant surprise in his first two NFL seasons, leading Baltimore to the playoffs both years.

What they have been lacking, though, is lacking no more. The Ravens made two huge offseason moves, signing receiver Donté Stallworth and trading for receiver Anquan Boldin. Suddenly, Flacco has two huge weapons in the passing game, making Baltimore the most complete team in the remarkably tough AFC.

And that's all the Ravens have been missing in recent years. They can now stretch the field to take the pressure off their ground attack, and a more versatile offense will help ease the pressure on their defense. They are suddenly the class of the AFC North and, in the world of AFC powers, are poised to move past the Indianapolis Colts.

4. THE PATRIOTS AREN'T DEAD, BUT THEIR AFC EAST REIGN IS

As soon as New England lost at home to the Ravens in the first round of the playoffs, NFL types reacted to Bill Belichick like they were Munchkins dancing around the carcass of the Wicked Witch of the East. The Patriot dynasty, to the declaration of many, was ding-dong dead.

That's probably premature, considering that the last time they slipped (to 10–6 and a pre-AFC title game exit in 2005) they went 28–4 over the next two years and lost in the AFC Championship Game and the Super Bowl. They still have Belichick, and they still have Tom Brady and an impressive cast.

The difference? The rest of the AFC East has caught up to them. The Jets have loaded up to make a run now, bringing in cornerback Antonio Cromartie, running back LaDainian Tomlinson and wide receiver Santonio Holmes. The Dolphins have steadily improved behind young quarterback Chad Henne and a powerful running game and defense.

The Patriots are still good. But the division is better. Much better, as they'll soon find out.

5. JERRY JONES WILL ENDURE MORE LATE-SEASON AGONY

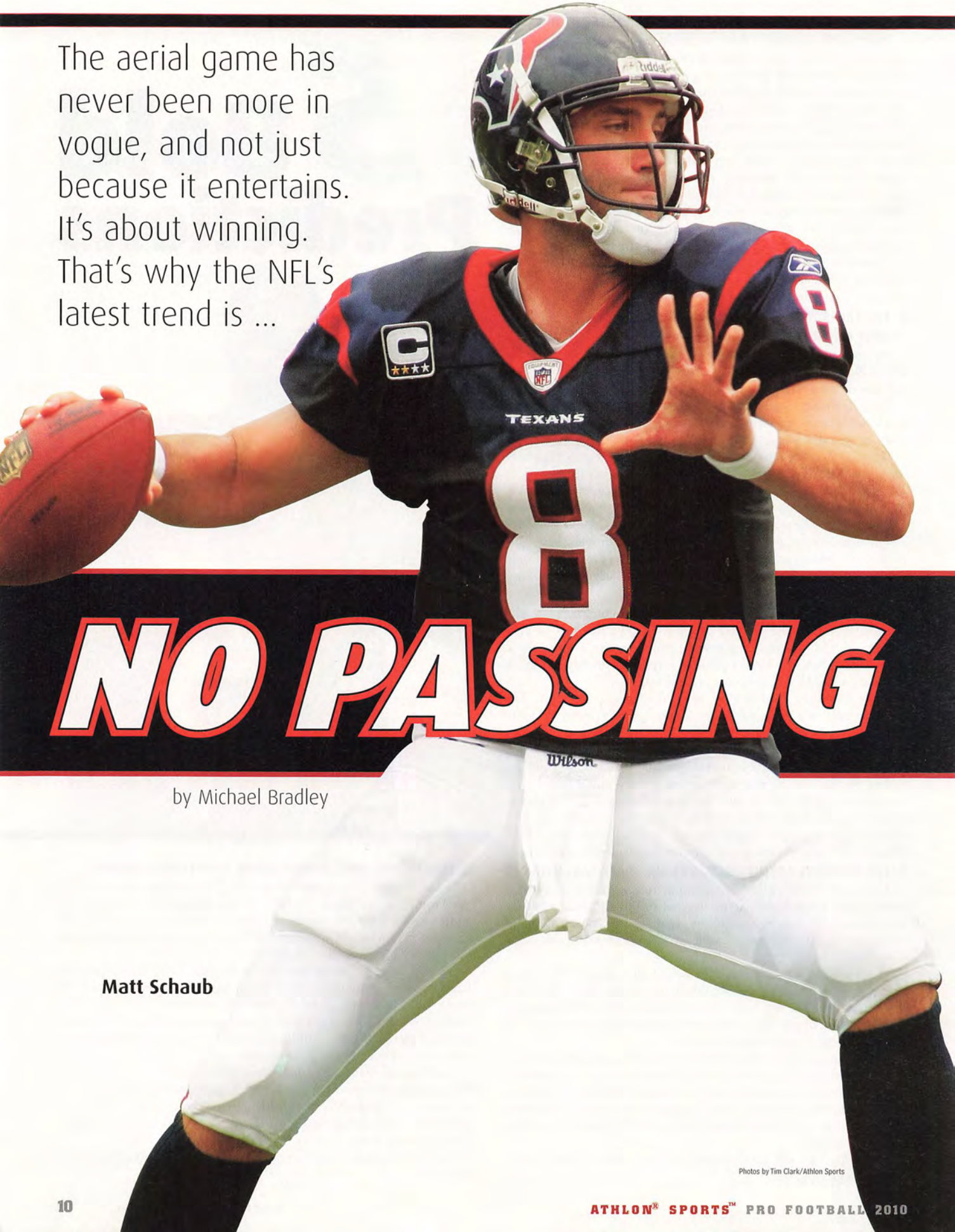
It had to pain Jerry Jones to watch his Cowboys get dismantled by the Minnesota Vikings in the NFC divisional playoffs last season. But truth be told, he wasn't targeting Super Bowl XLIV when he built his Cowboys. He wanted Super Bowl XLV — the one being played inside his $1.2 billion uber-palace in Arlington.

So you want to see agony? Watch his face in January when the Cowboys are on the doorstep of becoming the first team to play the Super Bowl at home — Jerry's Palace — and they lose in the NFC Championship Game. The Cowboys are loaded on offense and defense, and they cleared a major hurdle last season when they learned how to win in both December and the playoffs.

But they still managed to melt when it mattered most. Then, despite having a near championship-caliber team, Jones was unable to do much to improve it because of the restrictions of the collective bargaining agreement. They bring most of their '09 team back, but they couldn't bring in much help.

They'll wish they could have when they find themselves falling one step short.

The aerial game has never been more in vogue, and not just because it entertains. It's about winning. That's why the NFL's latest trend is ...



NO PASSING

by Michael Bradley

Matt Schaub

Photos by Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

When Matt Schaub gets a little too happy with himself for leading the NFL in 2009 with 4,770 passing yards and 396 completions, his Houston Texans teammate, wideout Andre Johnson, is there to remind him that great quarterbacks are made by receivers with blinding speed, the size to punk overmatched defensive backs and hands that could catch a hummingbird in mid-flight. Without Johnson, Schaub might as well be running the wishbone.

And when Johnson puffs up a bit too much about his league-best 1,569 receiving yards and top-ranked 22 receptions of 20 yards or more, Schaub makes sure the wideout knows he'd be nothing more than lawn furniture without a razor-sharp passer capable of delivering the ball on time and absorbing every hit delivered by slobbering defensive giants.

Peanut butter and jelly. Abbott and Costello. The Kardashians and outrageous behavior. The great pairs have symbiotic relationships that enhance each member. So it is with the Texans' Schaub and Johnson.

"Andre and I go back and forth," Schaub says. "He says it's nice for me to have him. Sometimes I think it's nice for him to have me."

ratings of 100 or higher, the most ever, while eight completed at least 65 percent of their throws, tying the record. Just 10 years earlier, only five passers rang up four bills through the air, six tossed it 500 times and just one was accurate enough to complete 65 of 100.

"Quarterbacks like Peyton Manning, Tom Brady and Kurt Warner have raised the level of play at the quarterback position to where it's never been," Ravens offensive coordinator Cam Cameron says. "No longer is throwing the ball translating into a lot of interceptions."

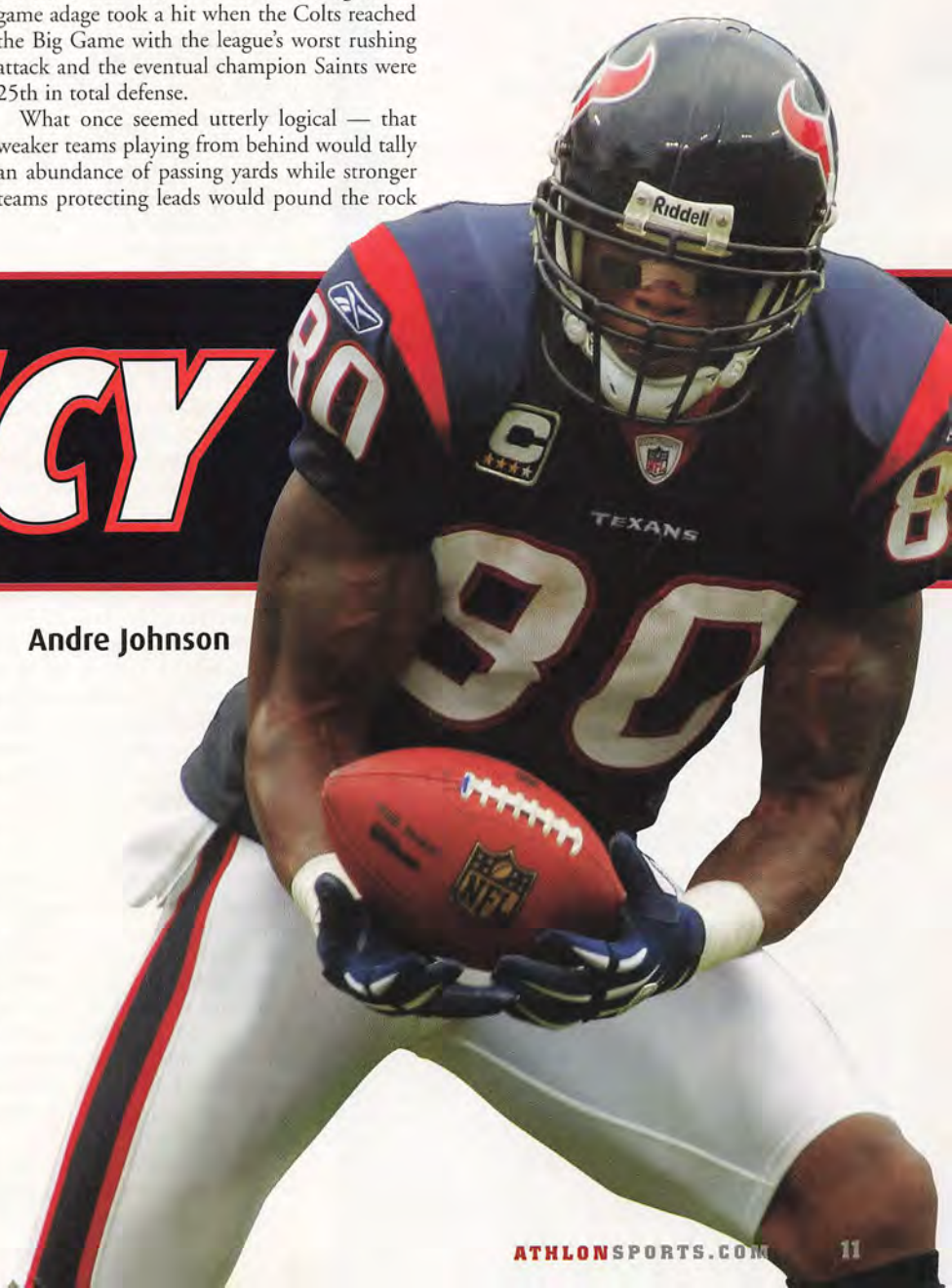
It is, in fact, leading to victories. Eight of the top-10 passing teams in 2009 made the playoffs, and two of the top four reached the Super Bowl. Only the Bengals (26th in passing offense) and Jets (31st) achieved success without a top-shelf air game. Both were among the top-10 rushing teams and had top-five defenses, but the old defense-and-ground-game adage took a hit when the Colts reached the Big Game with the league's worst rushing attack and the eventual champion Saints were 25th in total defense.

What once seemed utterly logical — that weaker teams playing from behind would tally an abundance of passing yards while stronger teams protecting leads would pound the rock to run clock — no longer meshes with reality. Now, you either throw it a bunch or you watch somebody else win.

"I'd like to think it's a great time to be a quarterback," Schaub says.

We have long since moved away from the days when control-freak coaches used the forward pass only in 3rd-and-long situations. No, this is about a league that has been embracing the pass for years, but of late has gotten even more intimate with it. The idea of "setting up the pass with the run" is losing favor. Teams now use the pass to set up more passes. Increased precision has led to fewer interceptions, the opportunity for more big plays and a league-wide attitude that attacking through the air can produce quick scores that keep defenses on their heels.

FANCY



Andre Johnson

It's great for Houston to have them both. At a time when throwing the ball is more popular than ever, Schaub and Johnson represent the march forward. Each takes full advantage of rules designed to promote the aerial attack and has honed the skills necessary to operate in complicated schemes designed to thwart mad-scientist defensive coordinators who try to inflict as much bodily harm on passers as is humanly possible. Today's quarterbacks study longer than their predecessors did, practice more, benefit from sophisticated approaches — right down to the peewee level — and exploit mismatches against befuddled defensive backs.

It isn't just a Houston thing. We're talking about a league-wide phenomenon here. In 2009, an NFL-record 10 quarterbacks threw for 4,000 or more yards, three more than the previous high mark in 2007. A whopping 14 quarterbacks attempted at least 500 passes, another new standard. Five passers registered

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"Offenses are saying, 'We're not afraid to throw it anymore," Vikings offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell says. "Subtle adjustments are now made at the line of scrimmage that allow the quarterback to take the easy throw. Offensive coordinators are giving quarterbacks the opportunities to make more decisions than a few years ago.

"We give them parameters, and they have the green light to anticipate what the defense will do. They have more tools they can pull out at any time."

When Cameron, then the Dolphins' head coach, watched his 11-year-old son's first football practice, he couldn't believe his eyes. This wasn't the old youth version he knew, where teams ran out of full-house backfields and the passing game was a gateway to chaos.

"They came out in the shotgun with five wides," Cameron says.

Football America loves the forward pass, and so does the NFL. It begins with the triggerman, and Cameron isn't alone when he marvels at the caliber of quarterbacks playing today. Cardinals passing game coordinator Mike Miller considers this a "golden age" of quarterbacks. "I've talked to other coaches, and they think there are more great quarterbacks playing now than there have ever been," Miller says.

Miller makes a great point. Manning, Brady and Brett Favre are sure-fire Hall of Famers. Warner has plenty of support for his candidacy. Donovan McNabb, Drew Brees, Ben Roethlisberger and Philip Rivers all have work to do, but it's possible to see each smiling in a yellow sports jacket in Canton down the line.

"Offensive coordinators are giving quarterbacks the opportunities to make more decisions than a few years ago."

— Vikings offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell

When they make their acceptance speeches, they'll thank teammates, coaches and families. They had better also show some gratitude to the NFL, which each year seems to make it easier to throw the ball. The rule forbidding defensive contact with a receiver after five yards is nothing new, but it is being called more closely. The days of the Patriots' corners being able to beat up Indy's wideouts are over. "When New England was so physical with people coming off the line, five yards seemed like 10," says ESPN analyst Tim Hasselbeck, a former NFL quarterback. "You don't see a lot of people doing that anymore."

There has been a rise in illegal-hands-to-the-face calls on the outside, too, something that used to be considered a normal part of the game. And once the ball is in the air, forget about it. Players such as Arizona's 6'3", 217-pound Larry Fitzgerald have built-in size advantages against most cornerbacks. Outlawing contact while he tries to catch the ball makes him practically infallible. "The league does a good job policing things downfield," Miller says. "If a guy has earned his space on a pattern, he gets a chance to go after the ball."

Keeping quarterbacks clean helps — a lot. Their ability to ground the ball once they're out of the pocket and the rule that prevents prone defenders from hitting them low while on the ground have given them a heightened sense of security. If quarterbacks believe they are safe and aren't "seeing ghosts," as Schaub puts it, they can be highly successful. "A million (quarterbacks) can execute well if they're not getting hit," Cameron says.

That's not to say the NFL has put a force field around them that repels defenders — yet. Anybody who watched the NFC title game saw the results of New

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Orleans' persistent pounding of Favre. His late interception wasn't directly related to the beating administered by Saints defenders, but he couldn't have been too excited about running on that decisive third down play with a mangled ankle. "It finally took its toll," Cameron says.

Until quarterbacks are allowed to work without fear of being hit at all — and some defensive types complain that might be on the horizon — it's important for coordinators to make it easier for them to get rid of the ball quickly and safely. One way is to employ a variety of quick, short passes, often thrown out to receivers who have taken a fast step back following the snap. After the catch, they attack corners one-on-one. "There are more high-percentage passes thrown," Miller says. "Guys can execute them, get the sticks moving and get the quarterback some confidence."

The gimmes help completion percentages soar, too. The traditional West Coast scheme used quick throws to backs in lieu of running plays. Now, teams are getting balls out wide to big-play specialists who could be one broken tackle away from six points. That's one of the reasons Schaub and the Texans are so lucky to have Johnson, who can "take a three-yard hitch, break a tackle and take it to the house," Schaub says.

"The passing game has really changed, especially in the short, quick passes and quick screens," Eagles offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg says. "If you get the ball out faster, it counters the blitz."

Cameron refers to those passes as "long handoffs," and they often accomplish the same thing as giving the ball to a running back, but with a couple of added benefits. First, they spread the field and force the defense to cover more ground. They also have the big-play component because a broken tackle in space could lead to a 25-yard gain, while a runner who slips a defender in the box usually finds another tackler waiting for him.

Sometimes, a quarterback will head to the line with a running play called as well as a default short pass. If he sees a receiver with soft coverage on the outside, he can flip the ball to him without even calling an audible. It's a straight sight read by the quarterback and wideout. "If it looks good for us, we'll get the ball out to the playmaker in space, rather than mash it up inside," Schaub says. When Hasselbeck was a backup with the Cardinals, he says any time they advanced the ball inside an opponent's 10-yard line, they looked for one-on-one coverage against Fitzgerald and went right to him. "The quarterback would take one step, throw it up to him and let him go get it," Hasselbeck says.

As playmakers such as Fitzgerald keep pouring into the league, passing attacks everywhere benefit. The explosion of spread offenses throughout the college, high school and Pop Warner ranks may not be doing a lot for quarterbacks, but it's creating a glut of talented wide receivers. "There is a ton of terrific athletes coming out of college now, and they're almost all receivers," Bengals defensive coordinator Mike Zimmer says. "The lesser athletes in college are playing cornerback." In the 1970s and '80s, colleges rarely went with three wideouts. Now, they're using five, all of whom can run and make plays in space. College programs are keenly aware of the financial value of scoring points and entertaining fans, so the offenses are winning meeting-room battles for "either/or"-style athletes who arrive on campus as freshmen.

The goal is to create as many advantages as possible. If Schaub can't get it to Johnson, he has Kevin Walter underneath. Or tight end Owen Daniels up the middle of the coverage. That versatility allows coordinators to come up with more sophisticated collections of patterns. "When you have (receivers) who can specialize, it makes the game plan easier to create because you can then dress things up with formations and motions," Schaub says.

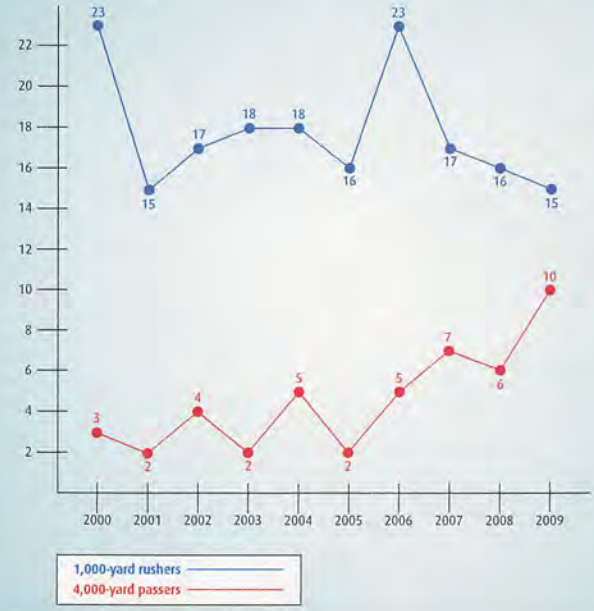
Ultimately, the depth, talent and diversity of receiving units make passing offenses far more difficult for defenses to control. For years, fans and media criticized the Eagles because they wouldn't give McNabb talented skill people, aside from Brian Westbrook and the Terrell Owens debacle. Coach Andy Reid believed his scheme would prevail. During the last two seasons, however, that philosophy changed as the Eagles added big-play wideout DeSean Jackson, receiver Jeremy Maclin, versatile fullback Leonard Weaver and halfback LeSean McCoy. Reid's moves prove that no matter how sound a gameplan might be — on either side of the ball — opponents can figure it out quickly and adjust. The chess game goes on for 60 minutes, but more important is how well teams exploit personnel advantages.

"Your scheme only holds up for about a quarter," Cameron says. "Everybody in the league sees everybody's tape. Good ideas are easy to come by. The matchup is the matchup.

"A guy in the NBA who is 7-feet tall is 7-feet tall all night. In the NFL, Randy Moss and Larry Fitzgerald are mismatches all day long."

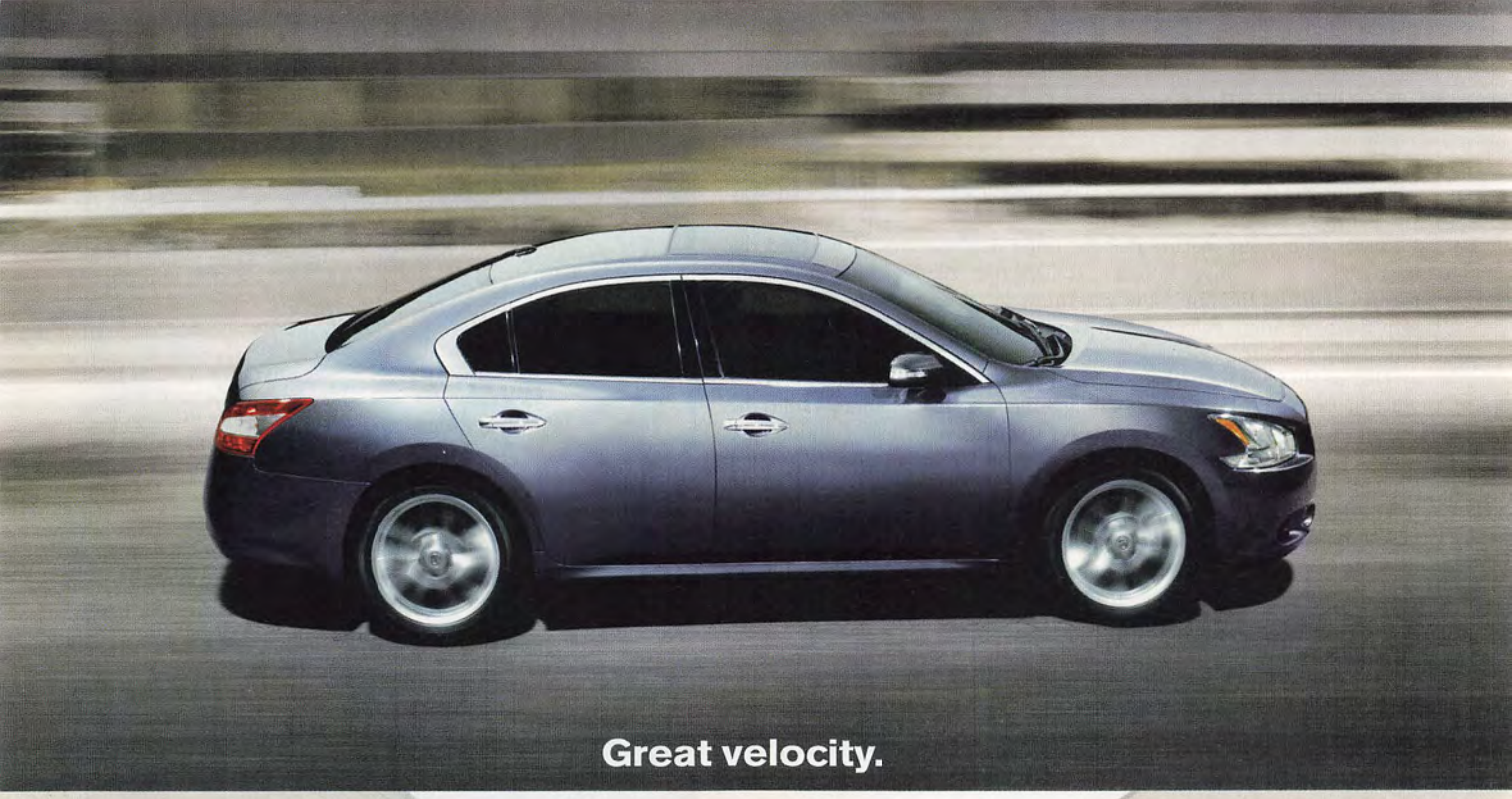
A faster way to travel

The league's progression toward offenses that rely heavily on the pass has been evident even in just the last 10 years. There has been a steady rise in the number of 4,000-yard passers each season and a slight drop in the number of 1,000-yard rushers.



"We're seeing better athletes on offense in college than on defense," Cameron says. "More basketball-type guys see football as another option. Twenty-five or 30 years ago, a football guy and a basketball guy were two different athletes."

That skill imbalance on the two sides of the ball graduates to the NFL, where teams can throw out five wideouts and then look for the mismatch. "If I can get your fifth or sixth defensive back on the field, I like my fourth receiver against him," Miller says. "That's a good matchup for me." Further complicating matters is the specialization of the receivers. Most of the league's better teams have a variety of targets with which defenses must contend. Look at the Vikings. Bernard Berrian is the speed guy. Sidney Rice is the tall, go-get-it type. Percy Harvin is dangerous in space from the slot. "We have all different kinds of receivers," Bevell says.



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Zimmer always knew things had changed in the NFL, but a trip to Miami for the most recent Super Bowl convinced him that the Old Way was gone.

"I was telling our coaches that the other day," he says. "I watched the quarterbacks at the Super Bowl and realized that (the NFL) used to be run the ball and stop the run. Now, you throw to set up the run. You have to stop the pass. Some defenses even want opponents to run the ball. They force them to do it."

That might be exactly what Rex Ryan wants to hear, but it's hard to convince the rest of the league that gaining real estate yard by bloody yard is the way to go. That's why Zimmer and his defensive coordinator buddies are spending more and more time coming up with ways to disrupt the passing game. If you ask Zimmer, there are three ways to do that.

The first is hitting the quarterback. "Until we get some quarterbacks hurt, they're going to keep throwing," Zimmer says. The second is dropping more people into coverage than are out in patterns. That forces the quarterback to hold the ball, make bad decisions and ultimately get hit. The final method is mixing up blitz and coverage looks, hoping to create confusion that leads to — you guessed it — a kill shot on the passer. This might sound redundant, but there isn't a defensive coach in the NFL who doesn't believe the way to slow down enemy attacks is by rocking the pocket. Saints defensive coordinator Gregg Williams made headlines in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl by saying his players would deliver some "remember-me" hits to Peyton Manning. Some people were appalled. Those in the league simply nodded in agreement.

"That's always the defense's goal," Schaub says. "They want to get to the quarterback. They want to knock us down and knock us around. They want to get into our heads that we have to get rid of the ball a split-second earlier than we want. We know we're going to get hit. We just have to deal with it."

Defensive coaches now bring pressure on first and second downs, which used to be all about stopping the run. They want to force third-and-long, which gives them the advantage. "Offenses will win most of the 3rd-and-2s," Bevell says. But it's tough to turn up the heat when contending with an ever-increasing number of personnel groupings deployed by offenses, which can line up varying numbers of receivers, tight ends and backs in all kinds

Saints defensive coordinator Gregg Williams made headlines in the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl by saying his players would deliver some "remember-me" hits to Peyton Manning. Some people were appalled. Those in the league simply nodded in agreement.

RBs: The rules have changed

Tim Spencer knows the job description for an NFL running back has changed during his six-plus years as running backs coach for the Bears. And since he hung 'em up in 1990 after six years with San Diego (and three in the USFL), life is radically different.

Spencer caught 53 passes during his time with the Chargers, with a high-water mark of 18 in 1989. Contrast that with third-year Bears back Matt Forté, who as a rookie snagged 63 balls — while also rushing for 1,238 yards and handling the complicated pass-protection responsibilities given to backs today.

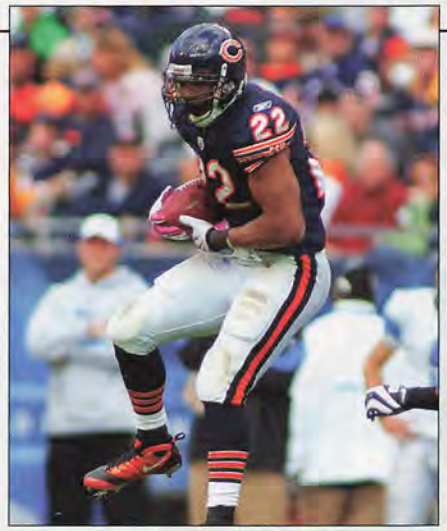
"We ask Matt to do a lot of things for us," Spencer says. "He's a gifted, smart player who knows the position. If I see a guy in the passing game who can do protection things and also run routes, and he can run the ball, I like that guy."

It could be time to rename the "running" back position in the NFL, because players such as Forté are expected to do so much in the passing game, too. Backs have been catching a lot of passes for years (see: Craig, Roger), but today they must handle myriad protection responsibilities if they want to get on the field on a full-time basis. "Running backs are the last line of defense for the quarterback," Spencer says.

Not that they're always happy about it. "LaDainian Tomlinson said to me, 'I'm still a running back,' even when he caught 100 balls (in 2003)," says Cam Cameron, former Chargers and current Ravens offensive coordinator. "He said pass protection was 2A, and receiving was 2B." The backs might not like their increasingly versatile roles, but they must master them. Even Vikings All-Pro Adrian Peterson, who came into the league primarily as a runner — and a very good one — has been required to update his resume. In 2009, he caught 43 passes, more than double his previous high.

"We knew what kind of back Adrian was," Vikings offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell says. "We focused on that, but then we had to teach him protections and routes."

Expect the learning to continue this season. And every one after that.



"We ask Matt (Forté) to do a lot of things for us. He's a gifted, smart player who knows the position."

— Bears running backs coach Tim Spencer

Forte: Peter Brouillet
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of formations. Trying to keep up can be difficult for defenses, which will often find themselves at a disadvantage against a certain package of skill players. "(Offenses) do a better job substituting than we do," Zimmer admits.

No matter who is on the field, offensive coaches had better have strong protection options available, the better to allow decisive strikes without exposing their quarterbacks to bodily harm. It starts with basic protection against a four-man rush. If you can't do that, you're cooked, because the more players you must keep in to help you win a five-against-four battle, the less effective you'll be. But the NFL has become more of a blitzing league than ever before, so the concept of thriving in an environment of extreme uncertainty and physical danger has grown as well.

It used to be that beating the blitz was all about the "hot read." Here comes the linebacker, so throw it to the back on a quick flair or use a fast-developing screen. You gain five yards, and the quarterback doesn't end up on the organ transplant waiting list. Things have changed, in part because of fire zones that drop linemen into coverage to thwart the easy solutions. Offenses still use the quick fix, but they're more interested in getting the ball downfield, no matter how many marauding defenders are at the gates.

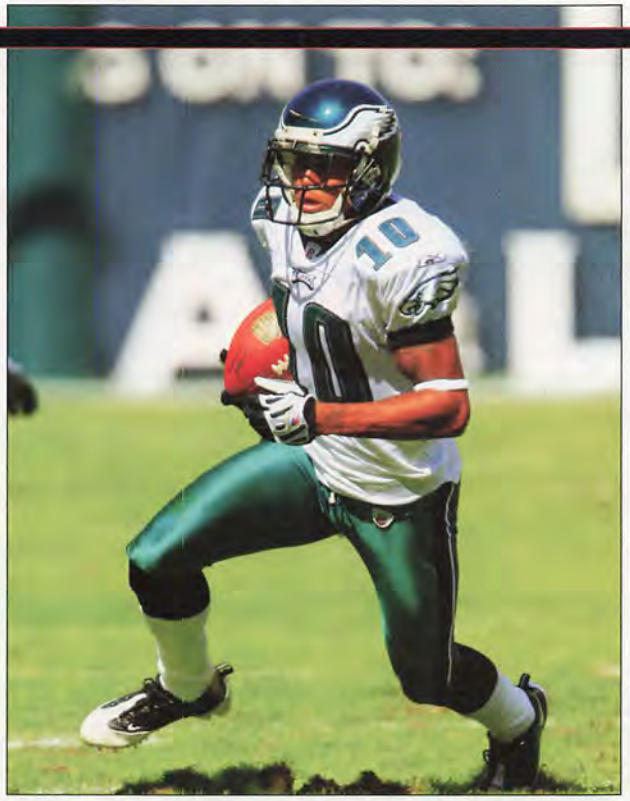
"More people have gone to picking the blitz up, keeping the quarterback clean and then attacking one-on-one matchups on the outside," Mornhinweg says.

Mornhinweg has the perfect weapon for that game in Jackson, the speedy third-year wideout who led the NFL with 18.6 yards per catch and 10 receptions of 40 or more yards last season. Isolating him on a cornerback, even if that means keeping everybody else in to block, can create a huge advantage for the offense. It doesn't always hit, but when it does, the scoreboard usually changes.

That's the goal, of course — scoring points quickly. The days of clock control and 15-play drives went out with hair bands and Jazzercise. In some ways, it's a throwback to the West Coast adage that you throw the ball early to get a lead and then hold on. These days, though, you have to throw to get the lead and throw some more to protect it. And sometimes you have to throw to get it back. "So many people are passing the ball well that a 10-to-14-point lead at halftime is not that safe anymore," Mornhinweg says.

That's why Schaub is so happy to have Johnson. And Johnson needs Schaub.

And defenses need help.



"More people have gone to picking the blitz up, keeping the quarterback clean and then attacking one-on-one matchups on the outside," says Marty Mornhinweg, the Eagles' offensive coordinator. Mornhinweg has the perfect weapon for that game in DeSean Jackson, the speedy third-year wideout who led the NFL with 18.6 yards per catch and 10 receptions of 40 or more yards last season.

To serve and protect

It might sound crazy, but when Texans quarterback Matt Schaub comes to the line of scrimmage, he wants to see a whole bunch of defenders ready to come after him.

"As an offense, you always hope for the blitz," he says. "That's how you can get big plays."

Of course, if Schaub's teammates don't protect him, the Texans can get their quarterback in the hospital, too. Indeed, one of the corollaries of the league's passing craze is the increased importance of protection. The Eagles lost their regular-season finale and first-round playoff game to Dallas last season, in large part because they couldn't protect quarterback Donovan McNabb. The Eagles tried everything to give him time, to no avail. As a result, Cowboys defensive backs played with more confidence and took more chances.

"You have to keep the quarterback clean," Eagles offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg says.

That's not always easy. Sometimes it appears as if pressure is coming from the right side, when it's really coming from the left. Teams that keep a tight end or back in to help pick up the marauders then must contend with even more blitzers because those defenders charged with covering the extra protectors will charge the pocket once they see the man for whom they're responsible is staying in.

"It's a chess match," Mornhinweg says.

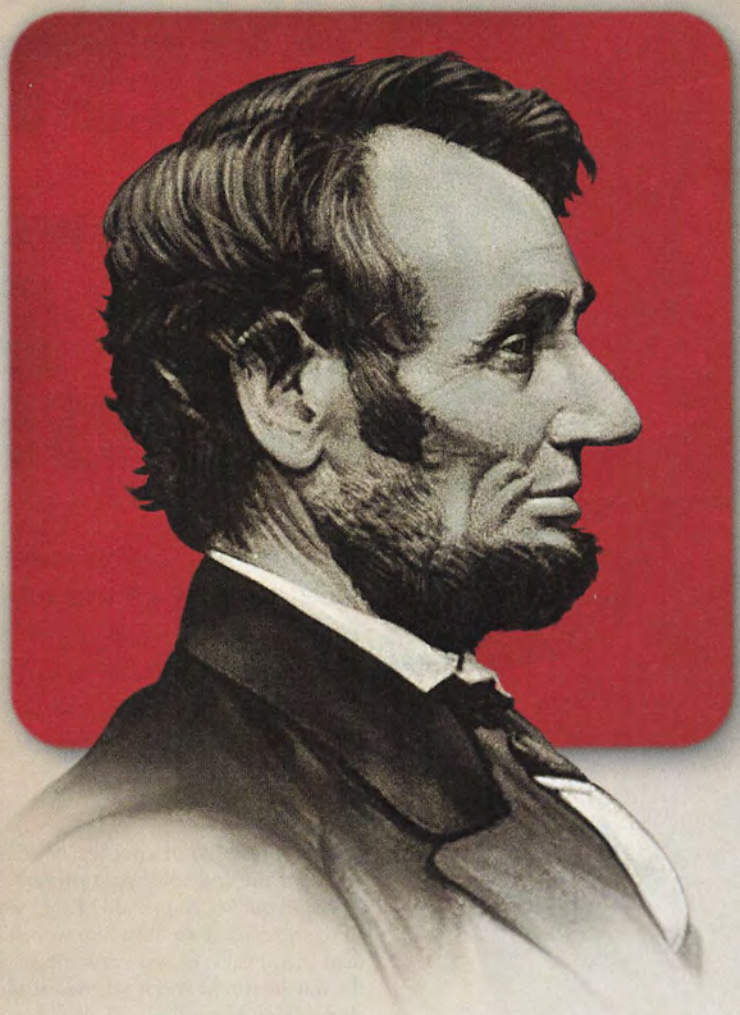
One way offenses have fought back is by giving the quarterback responsibility for changing protection calls at the line. That used to be done by the center, but now quarterbacks have more control of play calls and protection schemes. "They'll pick up the blitz and set up downfield throws, because that's where there will be holes in the defense," ESPN analyst and former NFL quarterback Tim Hasselbeck says.

Living on the edge has its benefits. But also its drawbacks.

"You have to keep the quarterback clean. It's a chess match."

— Eagles offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg

Mornhinweg: Drew Hallowell/Getty Images
Jackson: Athlon Sports



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We Have QUESTIONS

Lord knows, *REX RYAN* has *ANSWERS*.

Big and bold, Rex Ryan swaggered into New York last season, predicting a championship and angering opponents along the way. Guess what? The Jets came within 30 minutes of the Super Bowl, falling to the Colts in the AFC Championship Game. He still believes he had the best team in the NFL, and he expects it to be better in 2010.

Athlon Sports: What coaches have had the greatest influence on you over the course of your career?

Rex Ryan: My dad (Buddy Ryan) would be No. 1. I was around him all the time and I watched him work all the time, but there's more to it than that. Really, he was years and years and years ahead of his time in the way he would attack offenses, study protections, break down tapes, all that kind of stuff.

I inherited a lot of things from him as well. His leadership. He was a master sergeant in the Korean War. Somebody would ask for volunteers and nobody raised their hand. But when he would ask for volunteers, everybody would raise their hands. He had that kind of ability. I don't want to put myself in that category as a leader, but for some reason, guys will play hard for me. They respect the fact that I'm honest with them.

The Jets started hot, then lost six of seven, then finished hot. What happened in the middle?

Oh, man, we lost games every way possible. You run the ball for 320 yards (318, against the Bills) and lose a game. I don't know if that's ever happened before, but we threw six interceptions that game. Then to have two kickoff returns for touchdowns and — oh, by the way — a fumble returned for a touchdown, and play great defense, giving up 104 yards, and we still lost (to the Dolphins). It was strange. … There are all kinds of ways to lose games, and we found them, that's for sure.

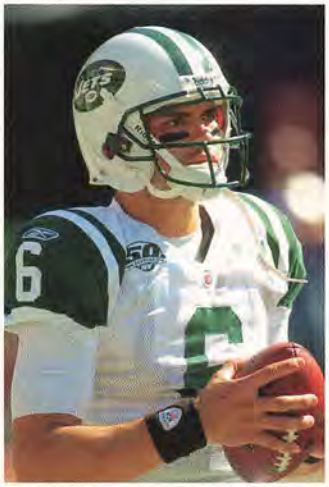
Be honest: When the Jets were 4-6, did you think you'd find yourself in the AFC Championship Game?

You know the way I am. I thought we would. I honestly thought we could do it. I told our guys and we kind of had a plan for it. I could tell our team was getting better; we just had to find ways to win instead of finding ways to lose. We were close. We got blown out really by one team, and that was the New England Patriots. They really handed it to us. Every other game we were in, right down to the wire. It's just a matter of hanging in there and finding ways to get it done. We have such a resilient group that we were able to pull it off.

Photos by Steve Moore

What went wrong against the Colts in the AFC Championship Game?

Well, several things. Obviously, you have to give credit to Peyton Manning and Co. What a tremendous quarterback. I've been beaten two times by him (in the playoffs), and I just think he's got my number right now. But we're going to find ways to get it done. We had an unfortunate injury (nickelback Donald Strickland, torn hamstring). As soon as they saw it, Tom Moore is a great coach, they took advantage of some matchups they had. You have to give them credit. They did a great job. They were the better team that day. That's hard for me to say because I thought we had the best football team in the league, but they proved that day they were better that day than we were.



How would you describe Mark Sanchez's growth over his rookie season, and what do you see as his upside?

I would describe it as remarkable. He came out of the gate hot, he's such a competitive kid; his enthusiasm is contagious. That was great. Obviously, he had some bumps in the road, but he kept fighting, hanging in there. He's just learning the game. Right now, he's not a rookie quarterback anymore. I think he's going to be sharp right when he comes back (from knee surgery). I think he's going to be ready to take off. He'll go from where he left off, which is one of the most efficient quarterbacks in the league. I think if we can do that — throw completions, run the football — we're going to be awful hard to beat.

Did you ever think you'd be bringing a baseball manager to a practice to teach your quarterback how to slide?

You know, I did that for another reason. I was trying to get Yankee tickets. (Laughs.) … I'm just kidding. With him, hey, let's get the best here, and there's no one better than Joe Girardi to come in and teach him how to slide. It's unfortunate because, a week later, he's going for a first down and he goes headfirst. He never slid and he ends up hurting his knee on that turf in Toronto (against the Bills).

Obviously, you have a lot of self-confidence. Do you ever question yourself?

I question things before I say them. Maybe it doesn't seem like that. I have confidence in my abilities, there's no question, but I have so much confidence in my football team and the players we have — the mentality we play with, the way we care about each other, the whole organization, top to bottom. That's where I get the most confidence from, not just my abilities, but in all of our abilities. That's why I just can't see us not being successful. … I have a huge belief in the people in our building. I love this team. There's no other team I'd rather coach.

Let's say you took over the Rams last year instead of the Jets. Do you think your system is such that you could have had the Rams in the playoffs last year?

We'll never know, but I know how I would've approached it. I would've assumed we would, yes. But I'm always going to think that. I've never gone into a game I didn't think I'd win. That's just the mentality I've always taken.

Do you have any regrets at all about your rookie season as a head coach? Do you wish you had any do-overs?

There's a couple, for sure. The obvious one is, after we got beat by Atlanta (in Week 15), I thought we were out of the playoffs. Nobody told me otherwise. … Obviously, that's something I wish I never said. I think the Channing Crowder thing (a back-and-forth through the newspapers with the Miami linebacker) got overblown, but I will say this: I'm never going to back down. This isn't necessarily Channing; if somebody challenges me or this football team, we're not backing down from anybody. In that case, the tone was playful to begin with, and it got blown out of proportion a little bit.

Why did you opt for lap-band, weight-reduction surgery in the offseason?

I did it because I want to be around. I want to see my grandkids. Somebody told me, "Rex, how many people over 300 pounds do you see that are in their 60s walking the streets?" As a matter of fact, hardly any. I'm healthy now. I was healthy to begin with. I've got low blood pressure, and I've got a great liver, great kidneys, everything, but I want to stay healthy. If I would've continued on the same path I was on, I would've had major health issues. …

Quite honestly, it was nothing. I had the surgery on Saturday and I was at work on Monday. If I had known it was this easy, I probably would've had it earlier as an assistant coach.

Did you ever consider the surgery as an assistant coach, thinking it might have helped your chances of landing a head job?

I had all those interviews, and I think the only reason I had them was because the players I had in Baltimore put me in that position. We were good enough to where it couldn't be ignored, so I got the interviews. I never got hired for whatever reason. Whether my size had something to do with it, that's unfortunate. But I got a team that was able to look past those things. Maybe I don't exactly fit the corporate image, but they knew I was a football coach and they knew I was genuine. I think that's why they hired me.

You were No. 1 in rushing offense and No. 1 in total defense, so what gets you to the next level this season?

I think we're going to be more balanced on offense. I think that's going to help us, but we're still going to have a ground-and-pound mentality. We'll be more efficient in the passing game. On defense, we're just scratching the surface. We did lead the league in defense by quite a margin, and in a bunch of categories, so we're right in line where we thought we'd be. Now it's just be consistent, year in, year out.

Outside New York, the Jets are being portrayed as a team that people love to hate, in large part because of your bold statements. How do you feel about having a target on your back?

I feel fine about it because we'll put a target on their team, too. That's fine and dandy with us because we are going to be a team you don't like because we're going to out-physical your team and we're coming in there to win a game. We're not going to bow down to anybody. If fans don't like it, so be it. I don't care if I'm liked. I just want to be respected and I guarantee you, they respect the Jets.

Position KINGS

Paying homage to the top players in the league at each position — and to the youngsters who will ascend the throne

by Dan Pompei

In the NFL, they say beauty is in the binoculars of the beholder. Who *he* says is best might not be the player *she* says is best. And the player who is best today might not be the player who is best tomorrow.

Here's what we say.

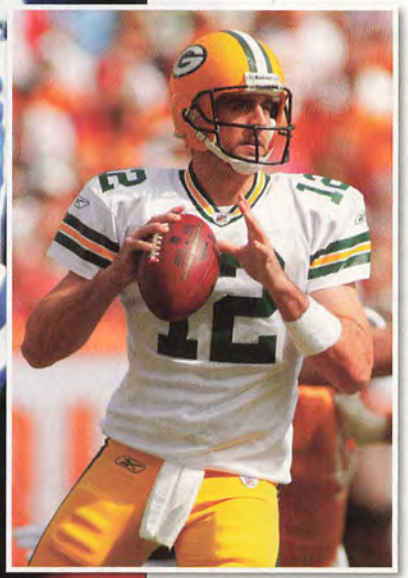
Quarterback

Today: Peyton Manning, Colts

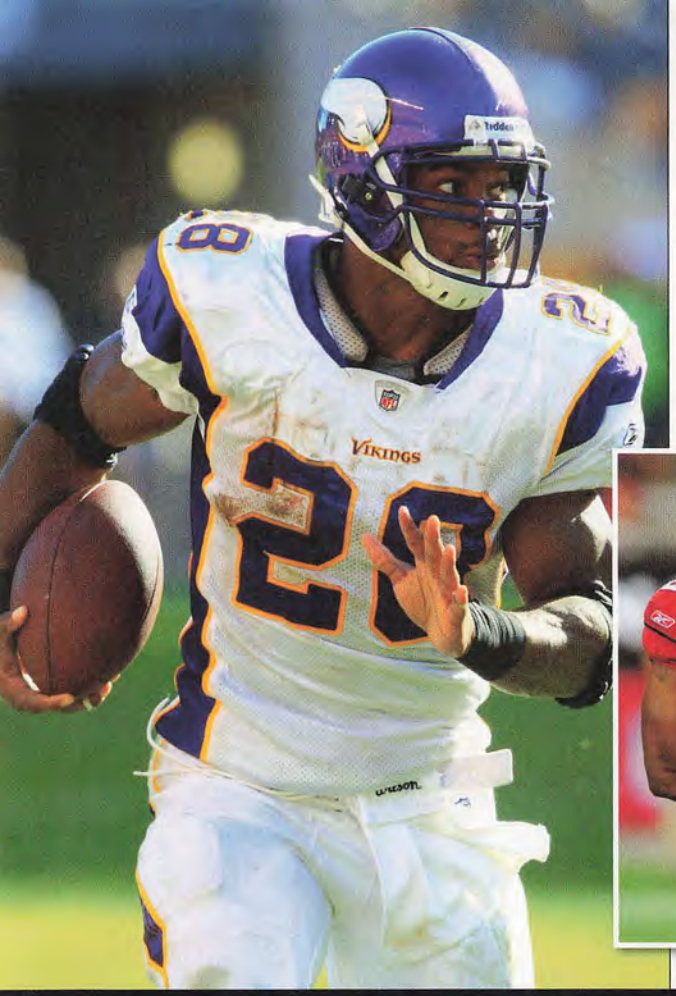
Those four MVP awards say it all. "What's really separated him from a lot of other players who are maybe even more gifted than him physically is the mental approach," says Jaguars coach Jack Del Rio. "He operates like an offensive coordinator playing the position."

Tomorrow: Aaron Rodgers, Packers

He has all the skills to be the NFL's next best quarterback — and more important, he has all the intangibles. "Aaron is a very consistent personality, and it's definitely carried over to the playing field," Packers coach Mike McCarthy says. "He's gone through as different a situation as I've been around coming into his first season as a starter. He handled that very well. The second year is always a big hurdle to get over because now defenses have an opportunity to study. He's been very consistent. He doesn't swing too high and doesn't swing too low. He's a good decision maker."



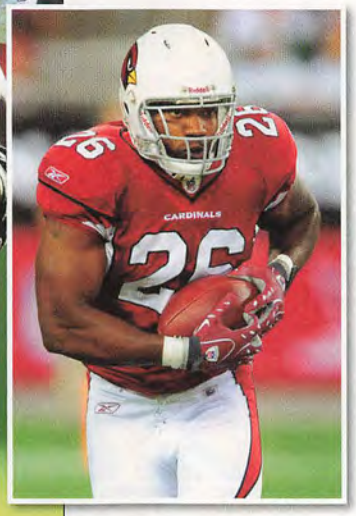
Manning: James Lang/US Presswire
Rodgers: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports



Running Back

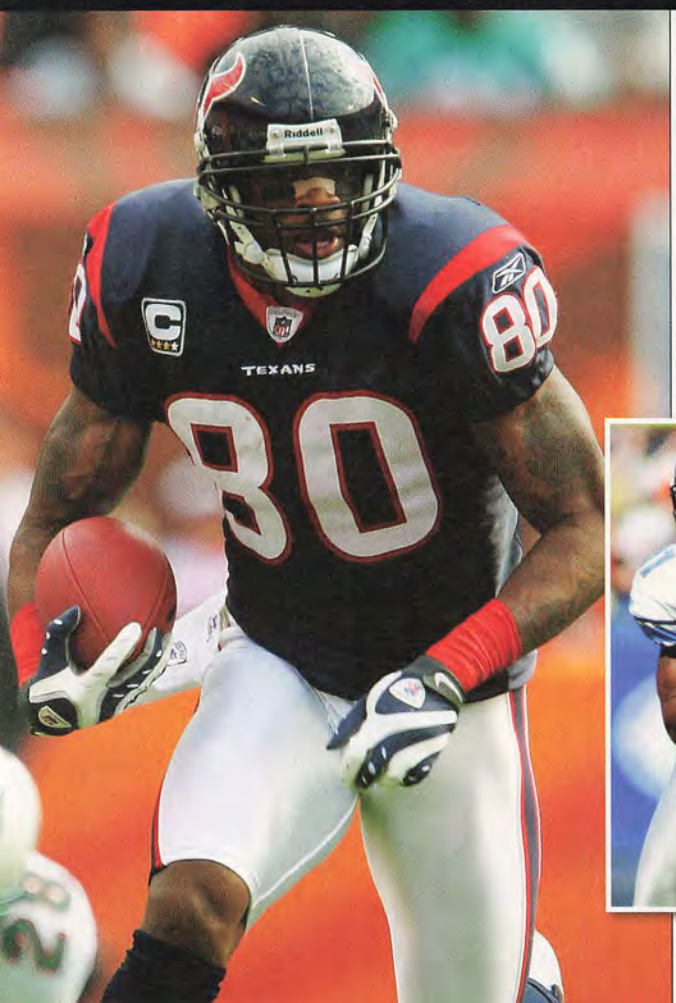
Today: Adrian Peterson, Vikings

No one runs the ball like the guy they call "A.D." (as in "All Day"), who has an incredible combination of size, power, speed, athleticism and determination. He can run inside or outside. He can get the short yardage and peel off the long one. Vikings coach Brad Childress told reporters last year that Peterson is "the best football player in the National Football League and he's the best running back in the National Football League, and I believe that."



Tomorrow: Beanie Wells, Cardinals

Without a doubt, Wells has the ability to become the NFL's next great back. He made significant strides over his rookie season, particularly in pass protection. All that could prevent Wells from reaching his potential is injury. "He's fast and explosive. He has size and strength and he breaks tackles," Cardinals general manager Rod Graves says. "He can run with reckless abandon and can outrun you. He's getting better and better."



Wide Receiver

Today: Andre Johnson, Texans

He never has played in a postseason game, he doesn't celebrate touchdowns Chad Ochocinco style, and he keeps his mouth shut. As a result, many fans have no idea how good he is. "When I scouted Andre Johnson, I thought he was the biggest, fastest and most talented wide receiver I had ever seen," says CBS and NFL Network analyst Charley Casserly, the former general manager of the Texans. "In addition to that, he has desire, competitiveness, work ethic and character."

Tomorrow: Calvin Johnson, Lions

This could be the wide receiver version of Barry Sanders — the best player at his position trapped in Detroit. The former second pick in the draft has everything it takes, and he soon may have a quarterback who can bring it out of him. "I haven't seen a talent like Calvin," second-year Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford says. "He's big, fast and strong. He has a great attitude. He runs after every ball, catches it."

Peterson: Athlon Sports; Wells: Mark Rebilas/US Presswire
A. Johnson: Doug Benc/Getty Images; C. Johnson: Peter Brouillet

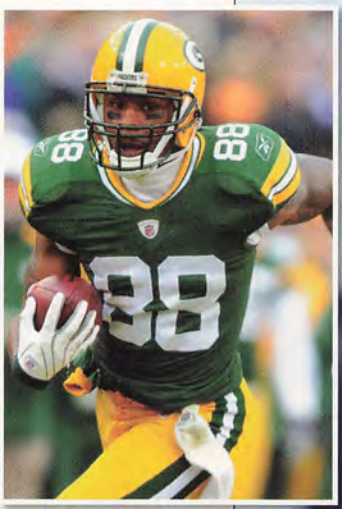
Tight End

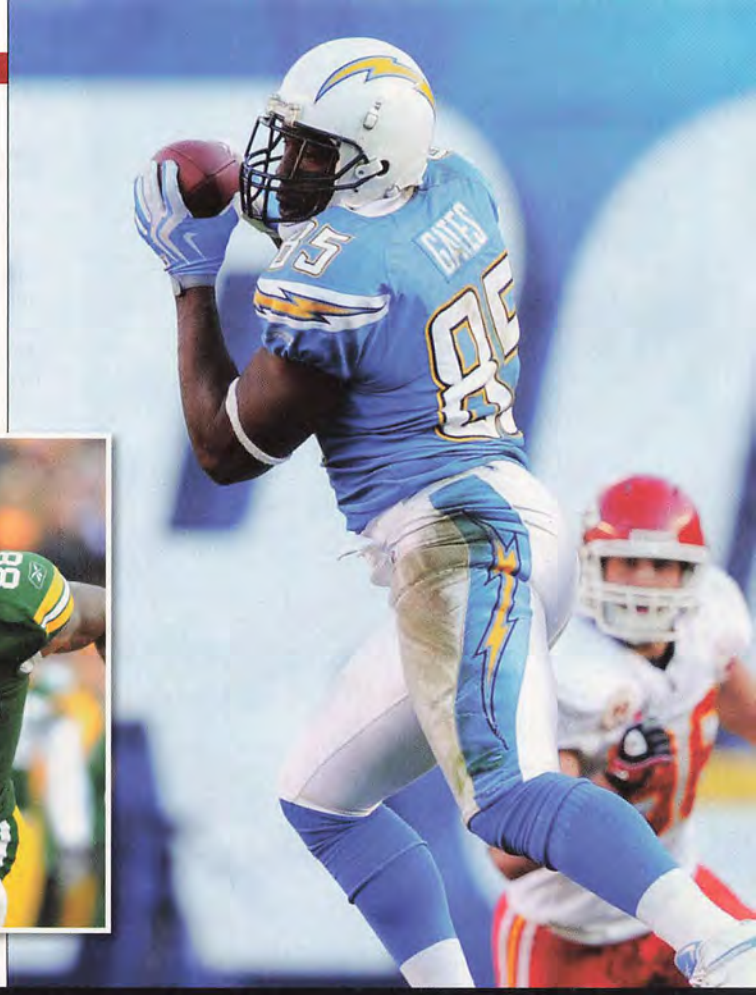
Today: Antonio Gates, Chargers

Some might prefer a more multi-dimensional tight end such as Jason Witten or Heath Miller, but Gates enhances his team's passing game more than any tight end in the league. "He isn't blazing fast," says Bears linebacker Hunter Hillenmeyer. "He doesn't really outrun people. But I don't think there is a better tight end once the ball is in the air."

Tomorrow: Jermichael Finley, Packers

Go ahead, try to cover this 6'5" tight end who runs like a Thomson's gazelle and catches like a spider web. "If you want to put a safety on him, we feel good about that matchup," Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers says. "If you want to put a linebacker on him, we feel better. If you want to put a corner on him, we still feel he can make plays."





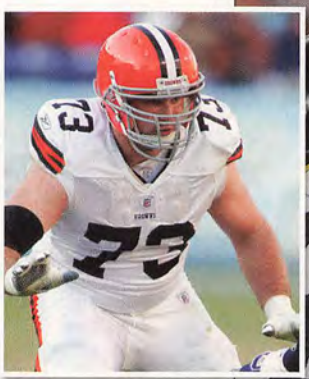
Offensive Tackle

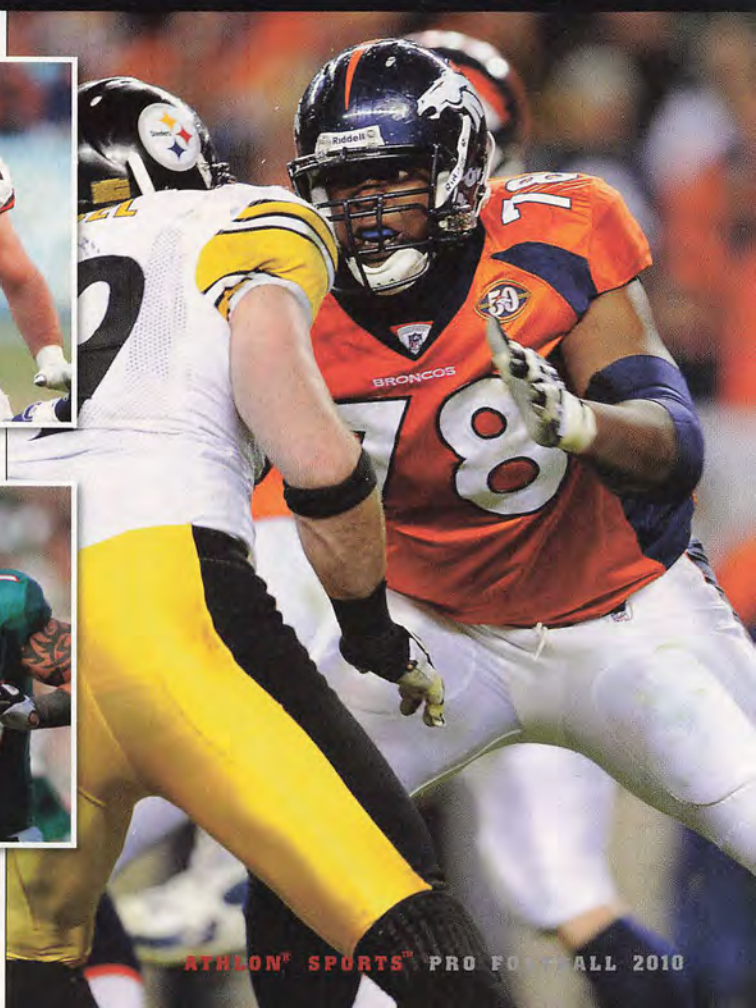
Today: Ryan Clady, Broncos

He has a body that scouts use as the prototype for his position. His arms measure 36¾ inches. "He has very good feet, incredible arm length, and he plays with a competitive streak, as he was a former defensive lineman," says former NFL personnel man Mike Lombardi, now an NFL Network analyst. "He is very good."

Tomorrow: The Big Three

Clady, along with fellow young left tackles **Joe Thomas** of Cleveland and Miami's **Jake Long** are very good young tackles who should be to the new decade what Jonathan Ogden, Orlando Pace and Walter Jones were to yesteryear. Don't expect anyone to surpass these youngsters anytime soon.





Gates: Christopher Hanewinckel/US Presswire; Finley: Tom Dahlin/Getty Images
Clady: Newman Lowrance/Getty Images; Thomas: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports; Long: Peter Brouillet

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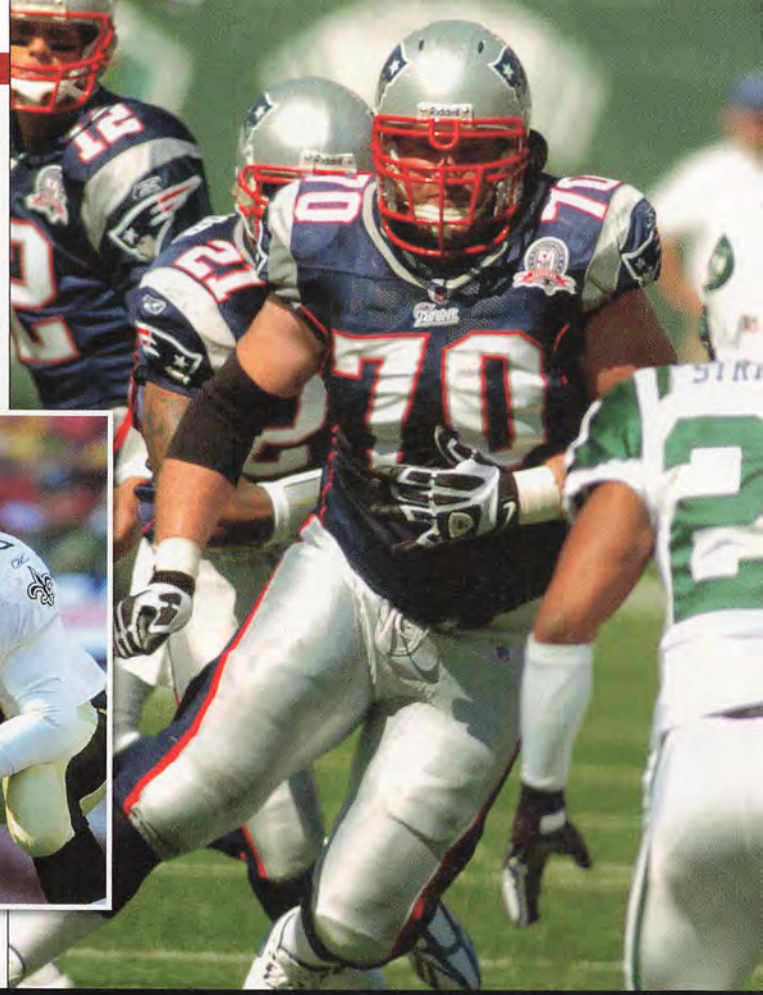


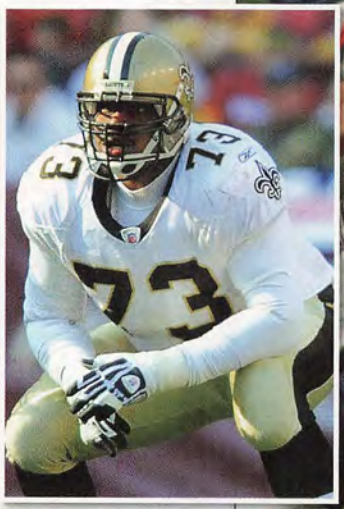
Guard

Today: Logan Mankins, Patriots

This former first-round pick is everything teams want in an interior blocker. "Logan is tough, physical and consistent," says Browns coach Eric Mangini. "He doesn't make very many mistakes. There isn't one area with him where you think, this is a deficiency you have to hide."

Tomorrow: Jahri Evans, Saints

Evans has come a long way from Division II Bloomsburg, and he's still improving. "He's a big, strong, really athletic and smart player," says Saints general manager Mickey Loomis. "Everything you want in an offensive lineman, he is. He's a wonderful kid, but he has a nasty streak on the field."



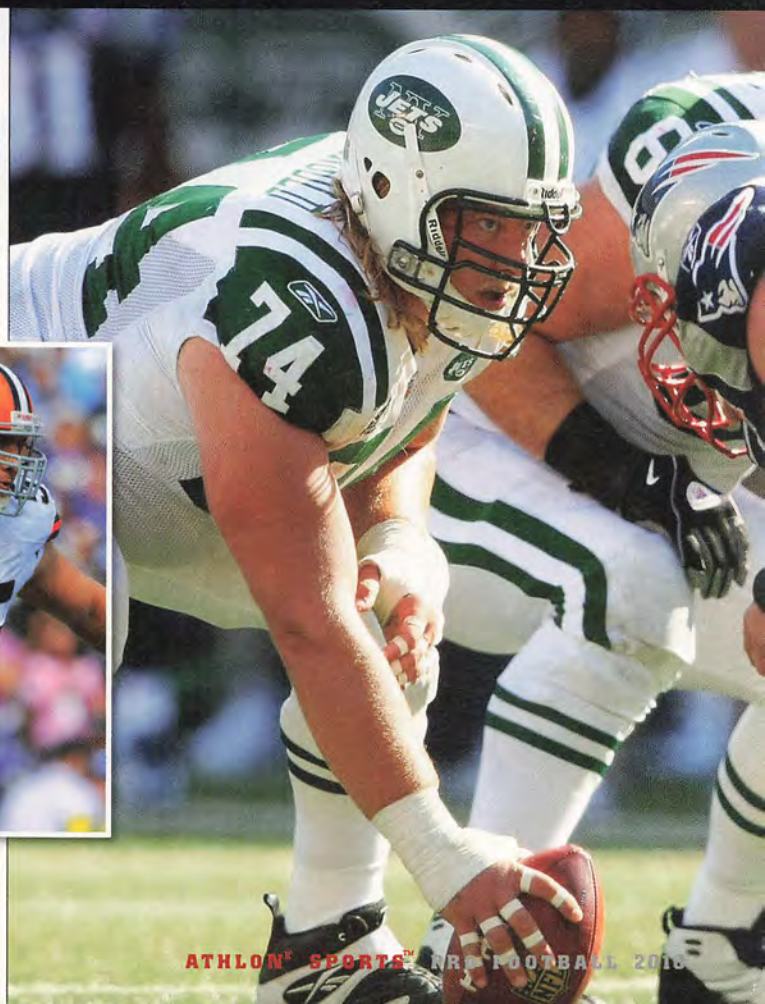
Center

Today: Nick Mangold, Jets

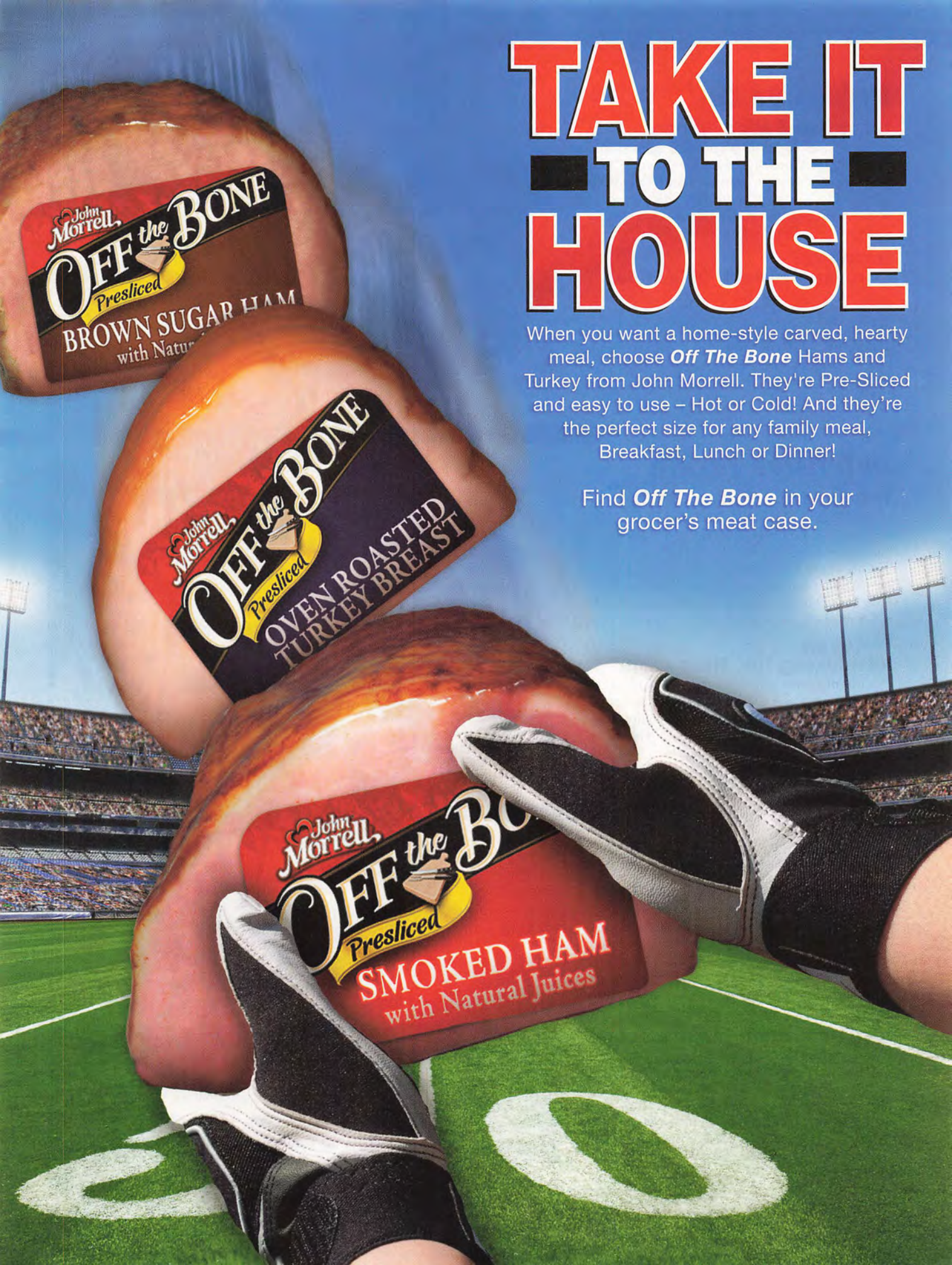
It figures that the best line in football is anchored by the best center in football. "He works very well with guards on double teams and in pass pro," says NFL Network analyst and former offensive lineman Brian Baldinger. "He can drive 3-4 nosetackles off the ball by himself, and can redirect himself to get the best possible angles. He gets to the second level through traffic, and his feet are always under control."

Tomorrow: Alex Mack, Browns

When the Browns chose Mack with the 21st pick in the first round of the 2009 draft, it was the highest a center had been picked since 1999. And for good reason. Mack started from Day 1 in Cleveland and showed signs of being a future star. One NFL scout praised Mack for his physical, nasty temperament, and said he also is an above-average athlete.



Mankins: Steve Moore; Evans: James Lang/US Presswire
Mangold: Nick Laham/Getty Images; Mack: Larry French/Getty Images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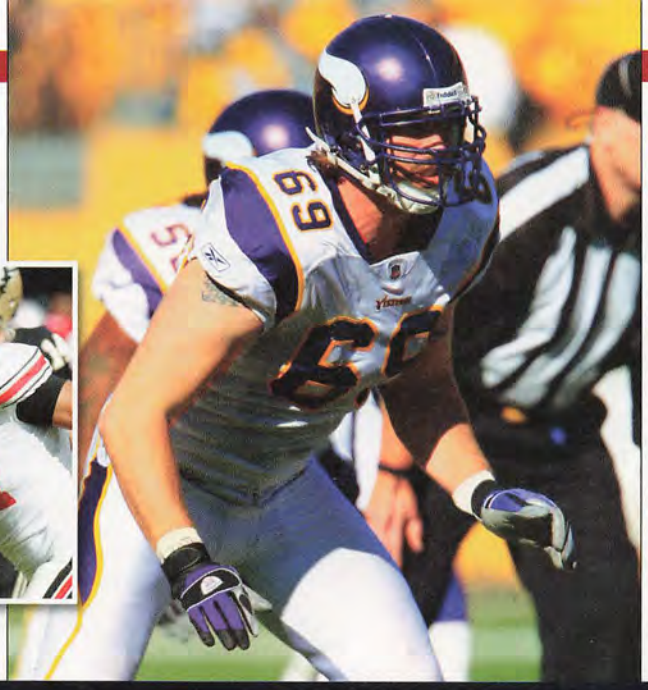
Defensive End

Today: Jared Allen, Vikings

The Vikings paid a steep price to acquire Allen in a trade with the Chiefs, but he has been worth it. He has 72 sacks over the last six years — more than any player in the NFL. "I want to be the best player at my position, the best ever," Allen says. "I know I have leaps and bounds to get there. That's what drives me."



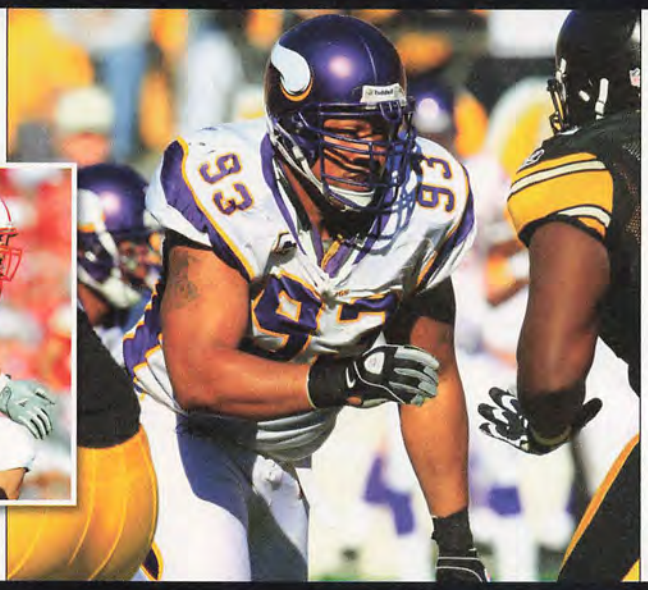
Tomorrow: Cameron Heyward, Ohio State

If there is a great up-and-coming pass rusher already in the NFL, he has yet to distinguish himself. Heyward, a senior at Ohio State, looks like the real deal. At 6'5", 288 pounds, he has the size to play end in a 4-3 front or a 3-4, and he could even be considered at tackle. He also has pedigree: His father is Craig "Ironhead" Heyward.

Defensive Tackle

Today: Kevin Williams, Vikings

No defensive tackle in the NFL rushes the passer as well and as consistently as Williams. He also defends the run very well. "He is such a unique talent — to be that big and to be able to rush the passer and play the run," Vikings defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier says. "You don't find guys over 300 pounds that are so effective rushing the passer."



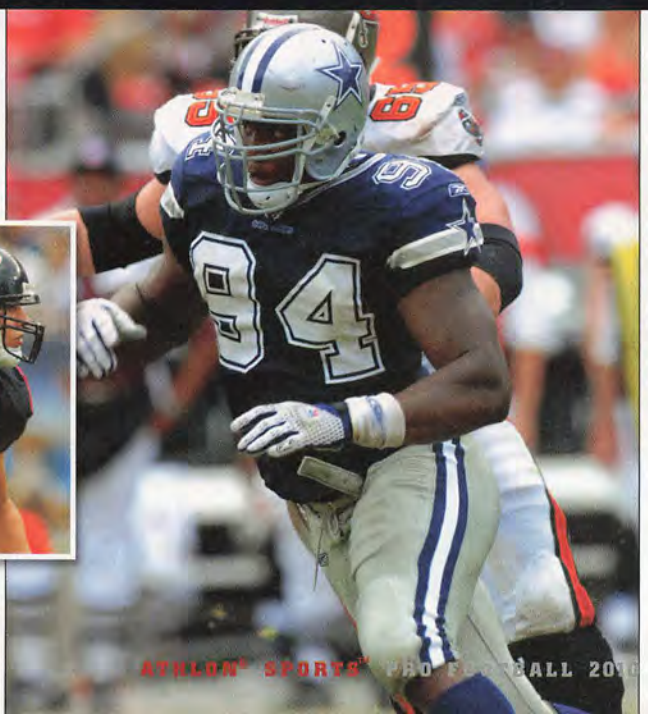
Tomorrow: Ndamukong Suh, Lions

It isn't often that a defensive tackle is regarded as the most talented player in a draft, as Suh was by many. "The thing that jumps out to me is his ability to make plays," says Raiders coach Tom Cable. "He can redirect, penetrate and create some issues for offensive linemen. He's very talented that way."

Linebacker

Today: DeMarcus Ware, Cowboys

The NFL is stocked with great linebackers, but no one impacts games more than Ware, who basically is a pass rusher in the Cowboys' 3-4 front. "Ware is so good because he's athletic and a tough player," says ESPN analyst and former Pro Bowl linebacker Derrick Brooks. "He plays with a high motor, and teams don't run at him enough to wear him down and make him play physical."



Tomorrow: Brian Cushing, Texans

As a rookie in 2009, Cushing was named AFC Defensive Player of the Week twice, and his 133 tackles tied for sixth in the league. He made the Pro Bowl and was voted Defensive Rookie of the Year. Texans coach Gary Kubiak says Cushing played like a 10-year vet from the minute he stepped on the field. Imagine how good he'll be once he gets experience.

Allen, Williams: Athlon Sports; Ware: Mark Langello
Heyward: Ric Fogel; Suh: Larry Smith; Cushing: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

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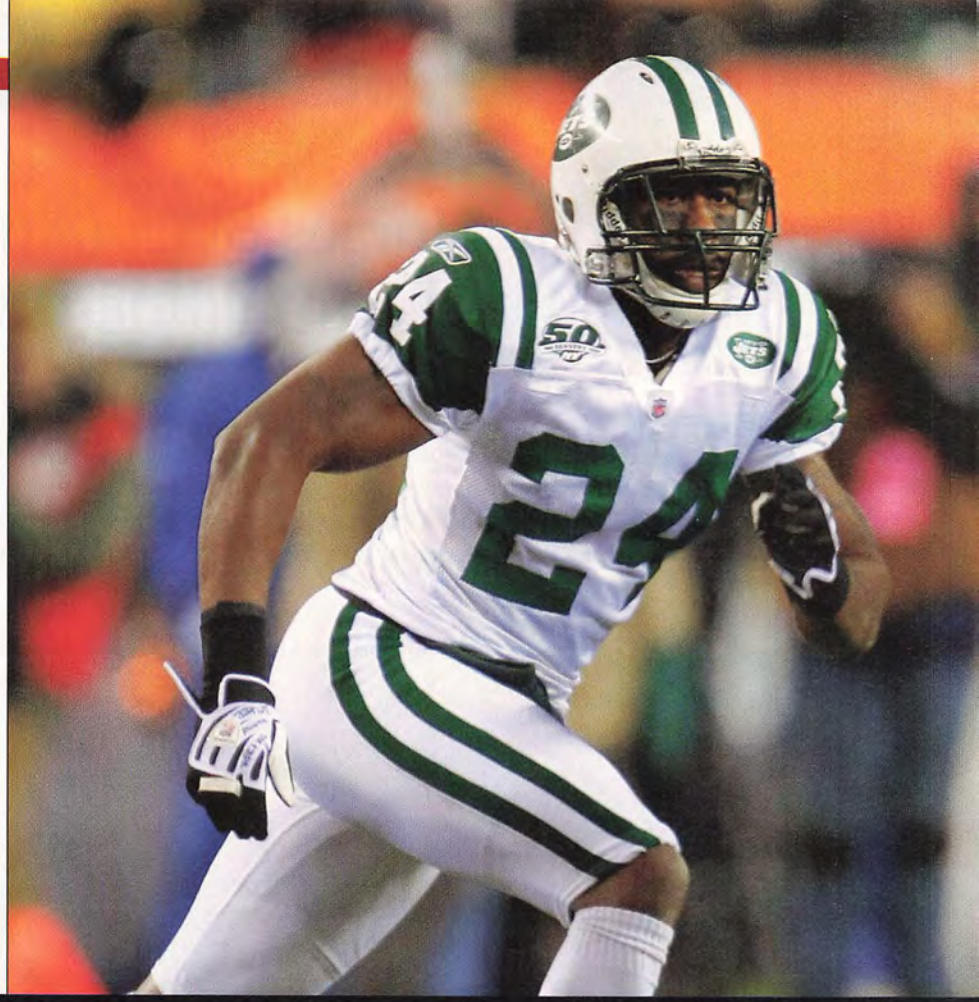


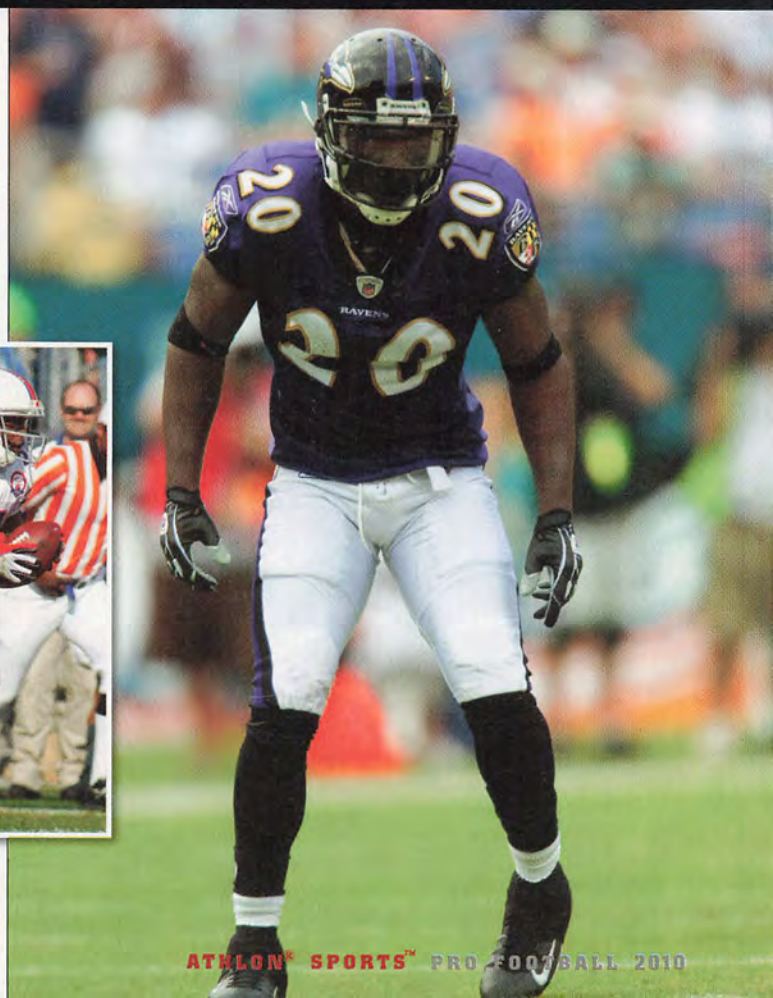
Cornerback

Today: Darrelle Revis, Jets

Revis overtook Nnamdi Asomugha of the Raiders as the best corner in football last season. Given the new challenges of Rex Ryan's demanding defense, Revis flourished. "He's mentally and physically tough," says ESPN analyst and former Jets coach Herm Edwards. "He has strong hands and great eyes and ball awareness. He has good change-of-direction skills, feet and hips, and great explosion out of his breaks. He's a solid tackler and very competitive."

Tomorrow: Revis

Revis turns just 25 in July, so it will be a while before anyone dethrones him.



Safety

Today: Ed Reed, Ravens

Teammates say Reed is like a coach on the field — but a very athletic one. Since he came into the league in 2002, the six-time Pro Bowler has 46 interceptions — more than anyone. "Ed Reed has a knack you can't coach," Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome says. "He prepares well and is instinctive."

Tomorrow: Jairus Byrd, Bills

After coming up with nine interceptions in 14 games as a rookie, Byrd has a bright future. He just needs to become more consistent when he doesn't come up with the football. But there is no denying he has a feel for the takeaway. "He's like a baseball player who can follow the ball," says Giants defensive coordinator Perry Fewell, who coached Byrd in Buffalo last year. "He is an astute, bright, intelligent football player."

Revis: Scott Boehm/Getty Images
Reed: Mike Dehoog; Byrd: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

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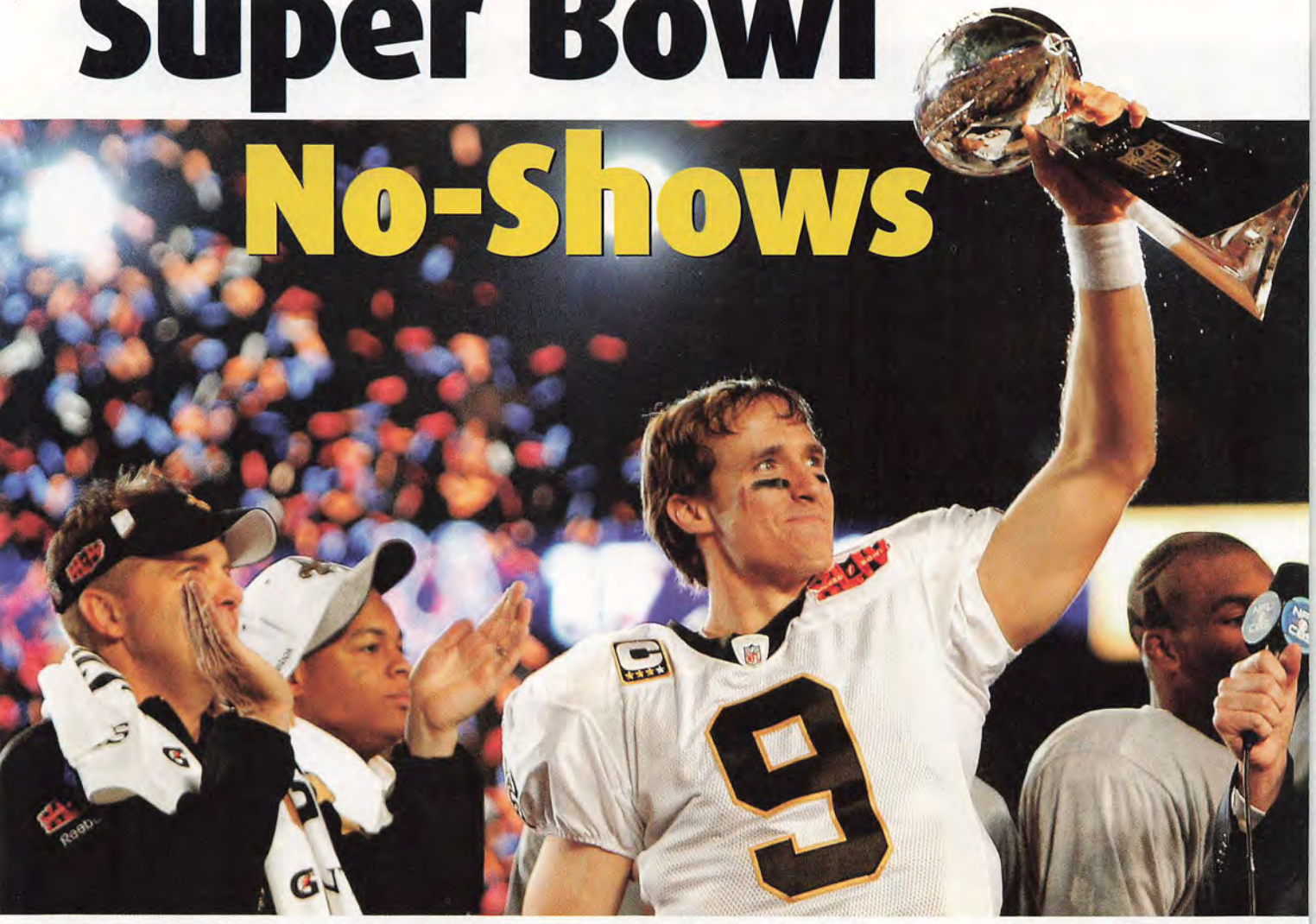
Super Bowl No-Shows



Chris Graythen/Getty Images

The Saints finally got off the schneid. Who's next?

by Dan Pompei

When the Saints reached the promised land last February, it gave hope to perennial failures around the league — if not the world.

No team had been more closely associated with futility than the Saints. Founded in 1967, the Saints took 21 years to post a winning record, 34 years to win a playoff game and 43 years to win the Super Bowl. The team that once inspired its fans to wear bags over their heads never even sniffed a Super Bowl until last season.

New Orleans had been one of five teams that never played in a Super Bowl. The other four — Cleveland, Detroit, Houston and Jacksonville — remain stuck in varying depths of muck. But at least now they can look to New Orleans for the inspiration, if not a blueprint.

The Saints showed that the cycle can be broken.

Here is a look at the four remaining teams that have never made the Super Bowl, ranked by how close they might be to duplicating the Saints' feat. That said, only the Texans and Jaguars look anywhere close to actually doing it.

1. Houston Texans

Because they have never made the postseason, the Texans might seem further away than they actually are. But the league's newest team is actually closer than the others after making steady progress and finishing above .500 for the first time last season. It's a bonus that team owner Bob McNair has stuck with coach Gary Kubiak, who is entering the fifth year of his program.

"There is no doubt we've made strides from where we started — it's night and day," Kubiak says. "We have a good young football team. We're not good enough yet … (but) we're in position. We should be competitive every week. We should expect to be a playoff team. Hopefully, the mindset has changed."

The Texans might be further along if they played in a division that did not include Peyton Manning. The Texans are 1–15 in their history against the Colts, and they have not beaten them in the last three seasons.

It helps that the Texans have some difference-making players in wide receiver Andre Johnson, arguably football's finest pass-catcher; defensive end Mario Williams, the former first pick in the draft; middle linebacker DeMeco Ryans, the quarterback of the defense; outside linebacker Brian Cushing, the reigning Defensive Rookie of the Year; and quarterback Matt Schaub, who led the league in passing yards (4,770) in 2009.

Trading for Schaub in 2007 could have been a turning point for this franchise. Says Texans general manager Rick Smith: "Matt's evolution as a quarterback and a leader of our team has been very important to our success and is important to our continued success."

2. Jacksonville Jaguars

Can it really be true that Jack Del Rio is going into his eighth season as coach of the Jaguars? It is, but it's not like the Jaguars have had a steady program for the last seven years.

They basically decided to start over from scratch in 2009 when Gene Smith was given the front office reins after Shack Harris' resignation. So the Jaguars are more like a team that is one year into a program than a team that is seven years into one.

"If you look at what we did, last year we made an aggressive play at turning this roster completely," Del Rio says. "We had 32 guys at the end of the year new to the roster. Normal turnover is 12 to 15. We had 16 rookies. You don't turn over like that if you are trying to contend for a championship. But we never are going to raise the white flag. We expect to win and play well. But if you are realistic, we knew we were turning over the roster and that we were doing that because it would be better for our future long term. We paved the road for the future."

What the Jaguars were looking to do as much as anything was to change the culture in their organization, and they believe they have done that.

They need to continue to upgrade their roster, however. It helps that they have the dynamic Maurice Jones-Drew as the centerpiece of their offense, and they believe free agent pickup Aaron Kampman can lift their defense. But unless quarterback David Garrard takes the next step and the Jaguars become a more consistent passing team, they will remain an also-ran.

3. Detroit Lions

The Lions have the inglorious distinction of being the only non-expansion team to never make it to the Super Bowl, and they aren't expected to change that anytime soon.

The good news for the Lions is it appears they have a quarterback who is capable of leading them to where they never have been. Matthew Stafford, the first pick of the 2009 draft, performed well enough as a rookie to give many Lions fans renewed hope. He probably is at least a couple of years away from being on top of his game.

The problem isn't Stafford — it's what's around him. "They want to play solid defense and have a strong running game, and those things still are not in place," says Jim Miller, a Sirius Radio analyst and former NFL quarterback. "They have made a lot of good moves, but it's still a makeshift defense. I think they still are quite a ways away."

Among the players the Lions have acquired this offseason to bolster their defense are No. 2 overall draft pick tackle Ndamukong Suh, end Kyle Vanden Bosch, tackle Corey Williams and cornerback Chris Houston. They still need more defensive playmakers, however, and could also use an immediate impact from Jahvid Best, a first-round draft pick who could replace Kevin Smith as the feature back.

There is confidence in Detroit that the Lions finally have the right management team in place to make the necessary moves. "Martin Mayhew, Shack Harris and Jim Schwartz — these guys get it," Miller says of the team's general manager, top personnel man and head coach. "They have a clear vision for what they want to do. And William Clay Ford has stayed out of the decision making, which is a good thing."

It's been 53 years since the Lions won their last NFL championship. The challenge for the Lions is forgetting about their history and focusing on their future.

4. Cleveland Browns

This organization has no hope if it keeps stopping and starting like a school bus. Over the last six years, the Browns have had four head coaches (Butch Davis, Terry Robiskie, Romeo Crennel and Eric Mangini) and four different men in charge of their front office (Davis, Phil Savage, George Kokinis and Tom Heckert).

And the change might not be over. If new team president Mike Holmgren decides he can't live with holdover coach Mangini after this season, the Browns will get yet another man in charge. The Browns have drafted poorly and have failed to develop and maintain the good players they did draft. From their last 10 drafts, only two first-rounders remain — offensive linemen Joe Thomas and Alex Mack. Gone are Kellen Winslow, Braylon Edwards, Brady Quinn, Kamerion Wimbley and others.

"You talk about a repudiation of what went before with Phil Savage and Romeo Crennel," says former Ravens coach and current FOX analyst Brian Billick. "They've gutted that team. I can't think of another team that has started over to that extent."

The Browns' lineup is remarkably pedestrian, and they have yet to settle on a quarterback they can be sure of. They have, at most, one player opponents actually have to game-plan for, and that's Josh Cribbs, whose main job is to return kicks.

"I'm not sure they weren't closer (to a Super Bowl) when they came back to the league (in 1999) as basically an expansion franchise," Billick says. "They were given a lot of draft picks then; it was favored-nation status."

Unless the Browns develop organizational stability, they will continue to perform more like an expansion team than the contending team their passionate fans deserve.

Super Bowl Droughts

Team	Seasons	Berths	Championships
Detroit Lions	**44**	**0**	
Cleveland Browns	**41**	**0**	
New York Jets	41 *	1	1 (III)
Kansas City Chiefs	40 *	2	1 (IV)
Minnesota Vikings	33	4	None
Miami Dolphins	25	5	2 (VII, VIII)
Cincinnati Bengals	21	2	None
Washington Redskins	18 *	5	3 (XVII, XXII, XXVI)
Buffalo Bills	16	4	None
Jacksonville Jaguars	**15**	**0**	
San Diego Chargers	15	1	None
San Francisco 49ers	15 *	5	5 (XVI, XIX, XXIII, XXIV, XXIX)
Dallas Cowboys	14 *	8	5 (VI, XII, XXVII, XXVIII, XXX)
Green Bay Packers	12	4	3 (I, II, XXXI)
Atlanta Falcons	11	1	None
Denver Broncos	11 *	6	2 (XXXII, XXXIII)
Tennessee Titans	10	1	None
Baltimore Ravens	9 *	1	1 (XXXV)
Houston Texans	**8**	**0**	
St. Louis Rams	8	3	1 (XXXIV)
Oakland Raiders	7	5	3 (XI, XV, XVIII)
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	7 *	1	1 (XXXVII)
Carolina Panthers	6	1	None
Philadelphia Eagles	5	2	None
Seattle Seahawks	4	1	None
Chicago Bears	3	2	1 (XX)
New England Patriots	2	6	3 (XXXVI, XXXVIII, XXXIX)
New York Giants	2 *	4	3 (XXI, XXV, XLII)
Arizona Cardinals	1	1	None
Pittsburgh Steelers	1 *	7	6 (IX, X, XIII, XIV, XL, XLIII)
Indianapolis Colts	0	4	2 (V, XLI)
New Orleans Saints	0 *	1	1 (XLIV)

* Won most recent appearance

NOTES

- There was no Cleveland Browns team from 1996-98.
- Five franchises have been located in two cities during the Super Bowl era: the Colts (Baltimore, Indianapolis), Cardinals (St. Louis, Arizona), Raiders (Oakland, Los Angeles), Rams (Los Angeles, St. Louis) and Titans (Houston Oilers, Tennessee).

Del Rio: Mark Langello; Schwartz: Gregory Shamus/Getty Images
Mangini: Ric Fogel

Extra Points

by Bruce Herman

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE NFL

The QB: Just another pretty face

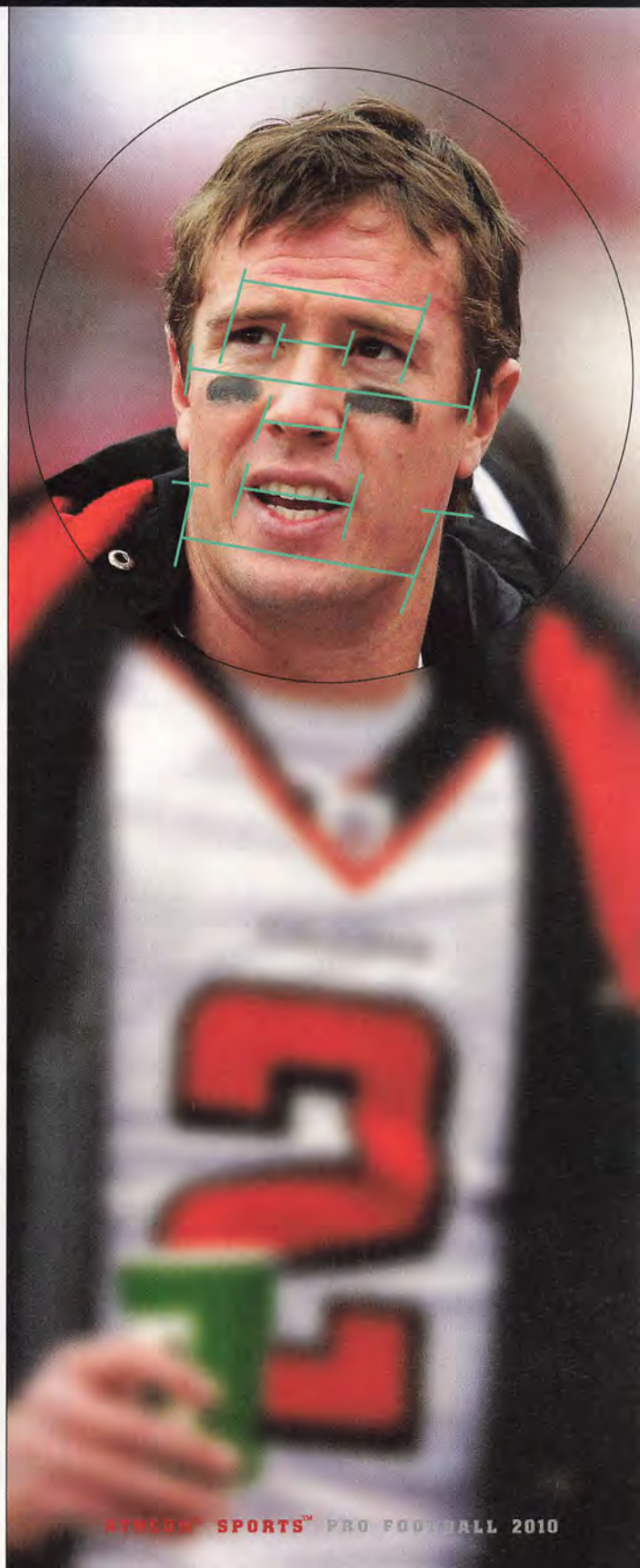
The phrase "good-looking quarterback" is usually inspired by things such as passer rating, poise and production. Who knew it was all about symmetry?

According to a study by Ursinus College professor Jennifer VanGilder and team, every 2009 Opening Day starting quarterback in the NFL possesses facial symmetry of 96 percent or higher. (The average schmo is lucky to hit 90.) This and earlier research postulates that it is this attribute that makes a person most physically attractive — and, apparently, that it's the pretty boys who get steered to football's glamour position at a young age.

"Previous studies have shown that symmetrical males have more masculine faces," says William Brown, who conducted similar work at Brunel University in the U.K. "Males with more symmetrical bodies are faster runners, better dancers, have more pleasing body odor, more attractive faces and more attractive voices."

We don't know how he smells, but the best-looking quarterback in the league, according to this criterion, is Matt Ryan **(right)**, whose 99.82 percent rating makes him a human buckyball. (For you non-physics hipsters, a buckyball is the most symmetrical large molecule known to man, making it — quite usefully for a quarterback — so resistant to collisions that it can withstand being slammed by a piece of steel traveling 15,000 mph without so much as a pockmark.)

Following Ryan on the hunk hierarchy come Brett Favre (99.78 percent), Aaron Rodgers (99.59 percent) and Matt Hasselbeck (99.56 percent). And if you happen to have a man-crush on Mark Sanchez, you should indeed feel dirty. The Jets' heartthrob rated only 20th in the analysis (albeit at 98.4 percent symmetrical). Ms. VanGilder obviously didn't get a look at those shirtless pix in *GQ*.



you can quote me

"Sorry to my fantasy owners. I apologize. I had myself today. It was a tough call."

– Maurice Jones-Drew, after taking a knee one yard short of the goal line to run down the clock in a Jags win over the Jets

Gifts for the NFL fan who has everything except ...

An NFL Hammer: $22.89 at sportshopdirect.com
An NFL Mascot Cross Stitch Kit: $9.59 at ecrater.com
An NFL Garden Gnome: $24.99 at starstruck.com
An NFL Wedding Garter Set: $17.99 at funweddingthings.com
An NFL Inner Tube: $29.95 at sportsnchips.com
An NFL Inflatable Sofa: $89.00 at trellisgardendecor.com
An NFL Advent Calendar: $29.99 at shop.fanhouse.com
An NFL Fireplace Screen: $199.99.95 at sportsunlimitedinc.com
An NFL Fiber Optic Ghost: $49.95 at diehardfans.com
An NFL Spatula: $19.95 at brickelsracing.com
An NFL G-String: $12.95 at belladonagarters.com

Something doesn't add up

"Good pitching stops good hitting," pointed out Casey Stengel once upon a time before adding, "and vice versa." Football stats often aren't any less contradictory. Here are some contradictions to contemplate from last season:

- Chris Johnson's 22 totes of at least 20 yards may have been nearly twice the total of any other back ... but no one had more carries without a positive gain (45).

Adrian Peterson may have missed a third straight NFC rushing crown by only 33 yards ... but he led the NFL with six lost fumbles.

- Jamaal Charles may not have been a top-10 rusher ... but no one moved the chains on a higher percentage (28.4) of his carries.
- Fred Jackson's 4.5 yards per carry may have been equaled by 112 players ... but none averaged more than his 7.5 from his 21st attempt of the game forward.
- Drew Brees may have won the Super Bowl ... but he was the only player in football to lose three fumbles inside his own 20-yard line.
- Fifteen qualifiers may have had a higher completion percentage than Chad Henne's 60.8 ... but none was more accurate (65.2) on third down with between three and seven yards to go.
- Jay Cutler may have been the 21st-ranked quarterback by passer rating ... but none threw more than his 17 second-half TDs.
- Matt Cassel may not have chucked a first-quarter score all season ... but his 10 in the fourth were unequaled.

— you can quote me —

"I hope it's not delay of game."

– CBS commentator Dan Fouts, during a "scramble" by plodding quarterback Carson Palmer

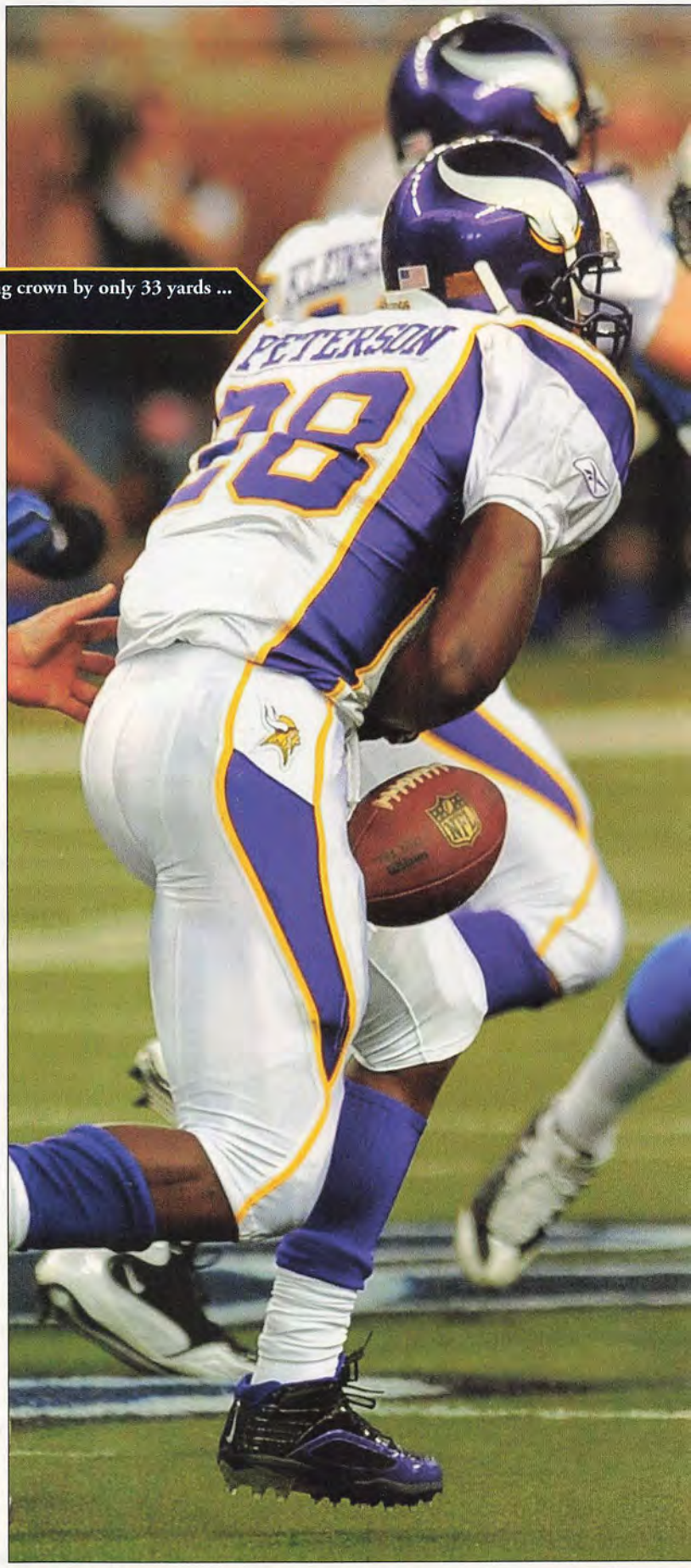
Crazy as Schmitt

Owen Schmitt was so psyched to be starting for Seattle against the Jags last Oct. 11 that he whacked himself in the head with his helmet repeatedly during pregame intros. The consequence was such a bloody mess that he required some skull stitching during the National Anthem which, in the ultimate irony, prevented him from starting.

This wasn't the first time. When Schmitt was at West Virginia, cameras caught him landing three solid shots to his own grill after shanking a nine-yard punt off his ankle. Although he tends to do as much damage to himself as others, it's the mano a mano ethos of football that most appeals to the self-flagellating fullback.

"It's like me versus you, who's gonna win and stuff like that," he grunts. "Uh, I like hitting things. Hah. ... I don't know what it says about a person, being able to physically cause pain to themselves."

For the answer to that question, Schmitt need only have turned on his TV after the game. The subject of that Sunday's *60 Minutes* segment was "A Blow to the Brain," which scrutinized long-term dome damage in football players.



Ryan: Joe Robbins/Getty Images
Peterson: Mark Cunningham/Getty Images

Peter Brouillet

Definitely maybe

Changing one's mind has become an offseason ritual in the NFL, with Brett Favre its high priest. Derrick Mason stands at the altar awaiting ordainment.

The borderline Hall of Fame receiver was cleaning out his locker in Baltimore in January when he provoked an impromptu mini-press conference with his casual cogitation that his decision whether to retire was "still up in the air." Coaxed to elaborate, he declared, "I'm done. This is my last season, seriously. I'm going to say it again: 'This is it.'"

Breaking news! Or was it? Mason also had made this claim during the summer of 2009, but this time he took only two minutes instead of a month to reverse his field.

"I'm more like 60-40," he suddenly hedged. And as the scribes scribbled, Mason continued to weave and juke. "I can't put percentages on it," he re-contradicted. "Anybody that gives you a percentage, even though I said 60-40, they're lying."

With the world wholly uncertain as to whether he was lying, waffling or just grammatically challenged, the league's 14th-leading career pass-catcher allowed things to simmer for a month, then issued an update on BaltimoreRavens.com.

There, Mason revealed he was unsure if he wanted to play at all but, if he did, he definitely wanted to play for two years. As for the timeline, he assured, "I want to make a decision quickly," before quickly equivocating, "I'm not going to rush the decision." And just to make sure he was clear, he added, "But I'm not going to draw it out, either."

you can quote me

"We'll have a plan that doesn't involve pooping our pants."

– Vikings punter Chris Kluwe, on how his special teams were preparing to defend Reggie Bush in the NFC title game

The power of 2

In Week 2 last season:

- Drew Brees was the second player to throw for as many as nine TDs in the first two games of the year. (Charley Johnson, 1965)
- Kevin Kolb was the second player of the last quarter-century to fire a TD pass of at least 70 yards in the first quarter of his initial NFL start. (Vinny Testaverde, 1987)
- DeSean Jackson was the second Eagles player with a score of 70 yards or longer in each of the season's first two games. (Timmy Brown, 1962)
- Mark Sanchez was the second rookie quarterback ever to beat Bill Belichick's Patriots. (Ben Roethlisberger, 2004)
- Rex Ryan was the second head coach of the past quarter-century whose team did not allow an offensive touchdown in either of his first two games with a new team. (Kay Stephenson, 1983, Bills)
- Frank Gore was the second player with two rushing touchdowns of 79 yards or longer in a game. (Barry Sanders, 1997)
- Kurt Warner was the second quarterback in 25 years with at least 20 attempts in a game to connect on more than 90 percent of them. (Vinny Testaverde, 1993)

Source for some material: Elias Sports Bureau

you can quote me

"He's got getting-away-from-the-cops speed!"

– Excitable CBS announcer Gus Johnson, as the Titans' Chris Johnson broke a 52-yard TD run

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CALENDAR OF THE WEIRD

Dale Zanine/US Presswire

you can quote me

"He didn't hit the landing, because if he hits the landing it's not a 15-yard penalty. I told him if he's going to do it, it needs to be Olga Korbut."

– Falcons coach Mike Smith, on Roddy White's penalty for somersaulting into the end zone

Sept. 10 In the NFL season opener, Santonio Holmes catches nine passes for 131 yards and one TD — his precise totals of the previous game he played, Super Bowl XLIII.

Sept. 13 The longest final-minute play from scrimmage (87 yards) to win a game in NFL history is completed when Denver's Brandon Stokley grabs a pass deflected by Cincinnati cornerback Leon Hall and is off to the races.

Sept. 20 Despite being outgained 409 yards to 166, and with JaMarcus Russell completing three of his first 18 passing attempts for 42 yards, the Raiders defeat the Chiefs, 13–10.

Sept. 20 Frank Gore rushes for 207 yards against Seattle — 206 of them before the second snap of the second half.

Sept. 21 The Colts use a quick-stun offense against the Dolphins to become the first team ever to win a game with a time of possession under 15 minutes.

Oct. 4 The Broncos assume the AFC lead in defense with a unit that starts eight players who were let go by other teams.

Oct. 11 The Browns' 2-of-17 passing game trumps nine false starts by the Bills, and Cleveland prevails for its first win, 6–3.

Oct. 14 Eric Mangini, recently scolded for not including a banged-up Brett Favre on the Jets' injury report for a 2008 game, retaliates by listing more than one-third of Cleveland's roster.

Oct. 18 The Redskins lose for the fourth time while playing their sixth consecutive winless opponent to open the season.

Oct. 18 Tom Brady torches the Titans for five touchdown passes in a span of nine minutes, 44 seconds of the second quarter.

Oct. 18 Five consecutive drives in the Browns-Steelers game end in fumbles.

Oct. 25 The average margin of victory of the 12 games is 21.2 points.

Oct. 26 The Eagles defeat the Redskins, 27–17, despite not taking one snap in the red zone.

Nov. 1 There are 14 plays of 50 or more yards in the week's action, including the first game ever with four such rushes (two apiece by Chris Johnson and Maurice Jones-Drew).

Nov. 1 Derek Anderson ends the day with a passer rating of 36.2 for the season. Had he thrown incompletions on all 154 of his attempts, it would be 39.6.

Nov. 8 Randy Moss catches a pass of at least 70 yards from his fifth different quarterback (Tom Brady).

Nov. 15 Prior to a win over the Eagles, LaDainian Tomlinson opens a gift left in his locker by his wife — a positive pregnancy test.

Nov. 16 The Browns are mistakenly awarded four timeouts in the second half, but their offensive famine still reaches five offensive touchdowns in their last 15 games (a period during which they change starting quarterbacks seven times).

Nov. 22 The Lions defeat the one-win Browns to terminate a 78-game losing streak in games in which they committed more turnovers than their opponent.

Nov. 23 The Elias Sports Bureau reports that Tennessee is the first team ever to play and win three straight games that were tied at the end of three quarters.

Nov. 29 After being outscored, 54–0, in their previous three fourth quarters, the Bills outscore the Dolphins, 24–0.

Nov. 29 Backup Falcons quarterback Chris Redman scatters 15 incomplete passes in the fourth quarter, but his final toss is a touchdown that beats the Bucs with 23 seconds remaining.

Dec. 3 The Jets conclude their season series with the Bills by rushing for 567 yards in two games, yet manage only two touchdowns.

Dec. 7 The Packers and Ravens rack up 310 yards in penalties, nine of which are pass interference calls.

Dec. 9 Chad Ochocinco reveals that he sets aside $100,000 at the beginning of every season to pay his inevitable fines.

Dec. 10 James Harrison's 62-year-old mother, Mildred, is charged with assault for her part in a rumble at a Veterans of Foreign Wars viewing party for the Steelers-Browns game.

Dec. 13 Vincent Fuller of Tennessee makes the fifth interception of his career, and the fourth he has returned for a touchdown — all coming in games he didn't start.

Dec. 17 In a war with Jacksonville that features an NFL record-tying nine lead changes, the Colts claim a mark all their own by winning a game they trailed in the fourth quarter for the seventh time in the season.

Dec. 20 STATS LLC reports that the Steelers' win over the Packers is the first 37–36 game in NFL history.

Dec. 27 In only his second NFL start, Carolina's Jonathan Stewart is the first and last player to rush for more than 200 yards in the 283 times the Giants played at the Meadowlands.

Jan. 3 The Titans win their eighth game following an 0–6 start, while the Broncos lose their eighth after a 6–0 start.

Jan. 3 With a two-yard rush in the fourth quarter, Miami fullback Lousaka Polite finishes the season 16-for-16 in third- and fourth-down conversions.

Jan. 3 Eagles linebacker Will Witherspoon, an October acquisition from St. Louis, plays in his 17th regular-season game.

Jan. 15 *The Wall Street Journal* releases a report saying that the average duration of actual action in NFL games in its study was 11 minutes.

Jan. 16 Arizona sets a record for most points allowed in consecutive playoff games (80, including 70 in a span of four quarters) before the second half against New Orleans even starts.

Jan. 19 In a matter of hours, the Cowboys paste the headline "Phillips Returning — Coach To Get Three-Year Deal With Cowboys" on their website, deny a deal has been made and then confirm that one has.

Feb. 8 The *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper in Norfolk sports the post-Super Bowl headline, "Colts 31, Saints 17."

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you can quote me

"He'll have to adapt to the NFL again after all those years at SC. For example, this week, Pete found out that NFL players pay for their own cars."

– Steve Mariucci, on Trojans coach Pete Carroll being hired by the Seahawks

Movable force, meet resistible object

There is an ancient Chinese story about a man who has two items for sale — a sword that can pierce any shield and a shield that can repel any sword. Asked by a customer to explain this paradox, he is rendered speechless. Which brings us to the 2–11 Browns' clash with the 3–10 Chiefs last Dec. 20, which turned that legend inside-out. When this featherweight bout began, both teams' offenses and defenses ranked in the bottom three of the NFL. When it ended, Cleveland had prevailed, 41–34 — but not before these paradoxes left us speechless:

- No NFL player had ever broken two 100-yard kickoff returns in the same game until 2009, when it was done twice — first by Ted Ginn Jr., then in this contest by Cleveland's Josh Cribbs against a Chiefs coverage unit that had not allowed a return longer than 37 yards all year.
- Cribbs' trips to the house gave him eight kickoff returns for touchdowns in his career, but this was the first time the Browns had won a game in which he did it.
- Brady Quinn had thrown 151 consecutive passes without an interception, but was picked off twice in a span of six tosses by a Kansas City squad that ranked 23rd in the NFL in INTs.
- The Browns' Jerome Harrison was averaging 17 yards rushing per game with one touchdown in his 43-game career, but he bolted for the third-highest total (286) in league annals and, in the second half alone, crossed the goal line three times.
- Cleveland snapped a streak of more than a year in duration with neither back-to-back wins nor double-digit scoring in three straight games.
- The Chiefs had sold out every game at Arrowhead Stadium for 19 seasons until this one, when they fell 20,000 short.
- The Browns won at a venue where they'd been winless for more than two decades despite Quinn's meager 66 passing yards and a 27.7 passer rating that actually raised the team's mark to 24.7 in its victories.

K.C. lost despite (a) its top yardage and scoring output of the season; (b) Matt Cassel's highest passing total as a Chief (331 yards, even though his receivers dropped nine passes and a potential game-saver was broken up by the goal post); and (c) Jamaal Charles' then-career-high rushing performance of 154 yards.

you can quote me

"The NFL should put Rex Ryan on the banned substance list because he is definitely a performance enhancer."

– Nosetackle Kris Jenkins, on his coach after the Jets beat the Titans in Week 3

Saving the best (and worst) for last

The Week 17 finale of the 2009 season featured more plot lines than an Italian art flick, running the gamut from heroic to humiliating.

The good: Breakout Chiefs star Jamaal Charles rushed for 259 yards while teammate Derrick Johnson took two picks to the house at Denver. ... Single-season record-setters included **Chris Johnson** (most yards from scrimmage, 2,509), Vernon Davis (most TDs by a tight end, 13), Ben Graham (most inside-the-20 punts, 42) and Shane Lechler (highest net punting average, 43.9).

The bad: Bronco Brandon Marshall was featured on the cover of a program at a game for which he was suspended. ... Major stars sitting out all or most of the action to avoid injury included Philip Rivers, LaDainian Tomlinson, Kurt Warner, Cedric Benson and Drew Brees. ... The playoff-bound Patriots lost Wes Welker to a major knee injury in a meaningless game. ... Cincinnati's Carson Palmer was 1-of-11 passing for zero yards.

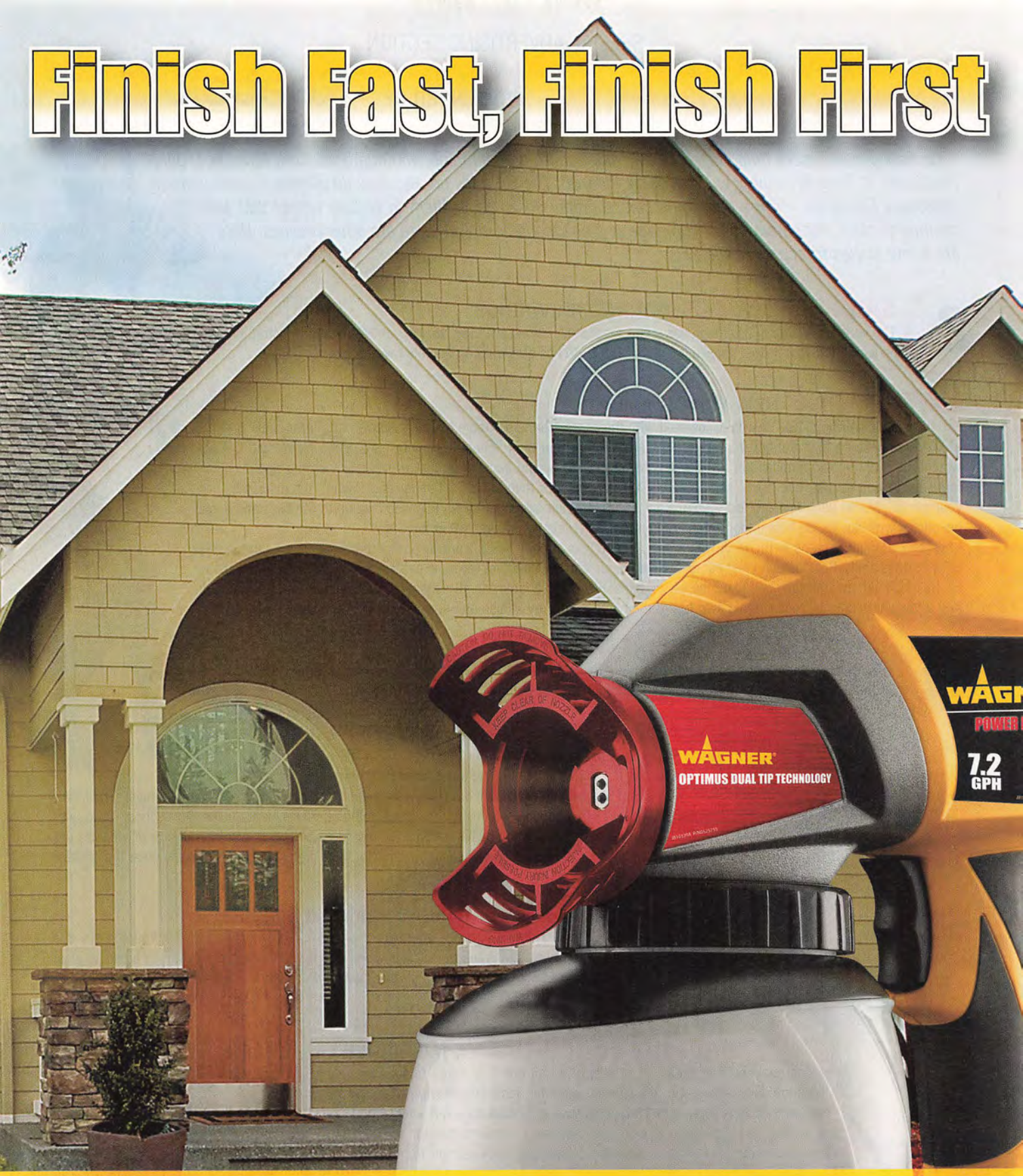
The ugly: The Bengals mustered 72 yards of total offense and five first downs while averaging 1.8 yards per play in a 37–0 shutout by the Jets. ... The Rams fared little better, netting only 109 yards against the 49ers. ... The Lions were vanquished for the 37th time in 40 tries — the worst stretch by a team since the 1920s. ... A Browns quarterback failed to throw for 100 yards for the 11th time in their last 22 contests. ... The Raiders became the first team ever to lose at least 11 games in seven consecutive seasons.

A TD — Give or take a foot

When the Dolphins met the Jets on *Monday Night Football* in Week 5, Braylon Edwards tiptoed to a touchdown in the back of the end zone — but Mike Tirico wasn't convinced. "It looks like one of his feet never came down," observed the ESPN play-by-play man.

In case anyone was wondering where that missing foot went, it got sucked into a vortex of reverse time travel only to be spat out at Jacksonville Municipal Stadium the week before. That was where referee Alberto Riveron confirmed after a second-quarter review that Mike Sims-Walker did indeed have possession of the ball. "As he is going down in the end zone, he has three feet down," Riveron announced on his mic.

Johnson: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports
Cassel: Peter Brouillet



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NAMES & NUMBERS

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Football players, more than players of any other sport, are identified with numbers. Brett Favre is 4. John Elway was 7. Terry Bradshaw was 12. Jerry Rice, 80. The list goes on. But how do players choose uniform numbers? For some, it's the same number randomly assigned to them in middle school that just seemed to stick. For others, it pays homage to a childhood hero. But there are other reasons. Here are a few stories from around the NFL.

2

SAGE ROSENFELS, MINNESOTA VIKINGS

The veteran backup quarterback has spent most of his career wearing No. 18 with Miami and Houston. But when he joined the Vikings last season, he chose No. 2. He has two children and his favorite band is U2.

10

ELI MANNING, NEW YORK GIANTS

For years, in Mississippi, No. 18 was associated with the name Manning. Archie Manning starred at quarterback at Ole Miss wearing that number from 1968-70. Later, at Newman High School in New Orleans, three Mannings would star wearing the familiar No. 18. Cooper, Peyton and Eli would each forge his own career wearing dad's famous number. In fact, the jersey earned seven All-State honors (two each for Cooper and Peyton, three for the younger Eli). But as each son entered college, they embraced their own identity. Eli followed his dad to Ole Miss and began his career with No. 10. So how important was it for Eli to keep his familiar No. 10 in the NFL?

When Eli Manning came to the New York Giants, No. 10 was already being worn by punter Jeff Feagles. And in the NFL, veteran rules apply. Rookies don't just come into the league and demand that veterans change numbers. But that didn't stop Eli. He made Jeff an offer too good to refuse, giving the entire Feagles family an all-expenses paid trip to the Magic Kingdom. And a few years later Eli received his own trip to the home of Mickey Mouse as Super Bowl MVP — wearing No. 10.

11

ROY WILLIAMS, DALLAS COWBOYS

The wide receiver who began his career with the Detroit Lions has always worn No. 11. Two reasons: He says that it makes him look slim; and 11 is the easiest number to write when signing autographs.

17

PHILIP RIVERS, SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Philip Rivers, the most decorated quarterback in the history of NC State, and possibly becoming the most decorated quarterback in the history of the San Diego Chargers, has worn No. 17 since his freshman year in Athens, Ala. Rivers' dad, who had worn No. 17 in high school, coached the blossoming quarterback at Athens High School. There was no doubt then — or now — who Philip's hero is. It's his dad. And Rivers wouldn't dream of wearing any other number. Philip's younger brother, Stephen, wore No. 17 in high school and plans to wear it in college as well.

21

FRANK GORE, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

The star running back for the 49ers chose No. 21 because 2 + 1 = 3. You see, No. 3 is the number that Frank has always worn. And the NFL requires all running backs to wear numbers between 20 and 49, so No. 3 was not available — unless Frank wanted to play quarterback, kicker or punter.

32

MAURICE JONES-DREW, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Most players' first option is to keep the uniform they made famous in college. Not so with Maurice Jones-Drew. The top running back for Jacksonville wore No. 21 at UCLA, where he rushed for 2,503 yards and 26 touchdowns as a collegian. But after sitting and waiting for his name to be called on draft day — waiting through the entire first round — his name was not called. The All-American from UCLA was passed over by all 32 NFL teams (some of them twice) before Jacksonville called his name late in the second round (60th overall). Today, recognized as one of the elite backs in the NFL, Maurice wears No. 32 as a reminder of the 32 teams that passed on him that day — and the 31 teams that wish they hadn't.

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NFL PLAYERS

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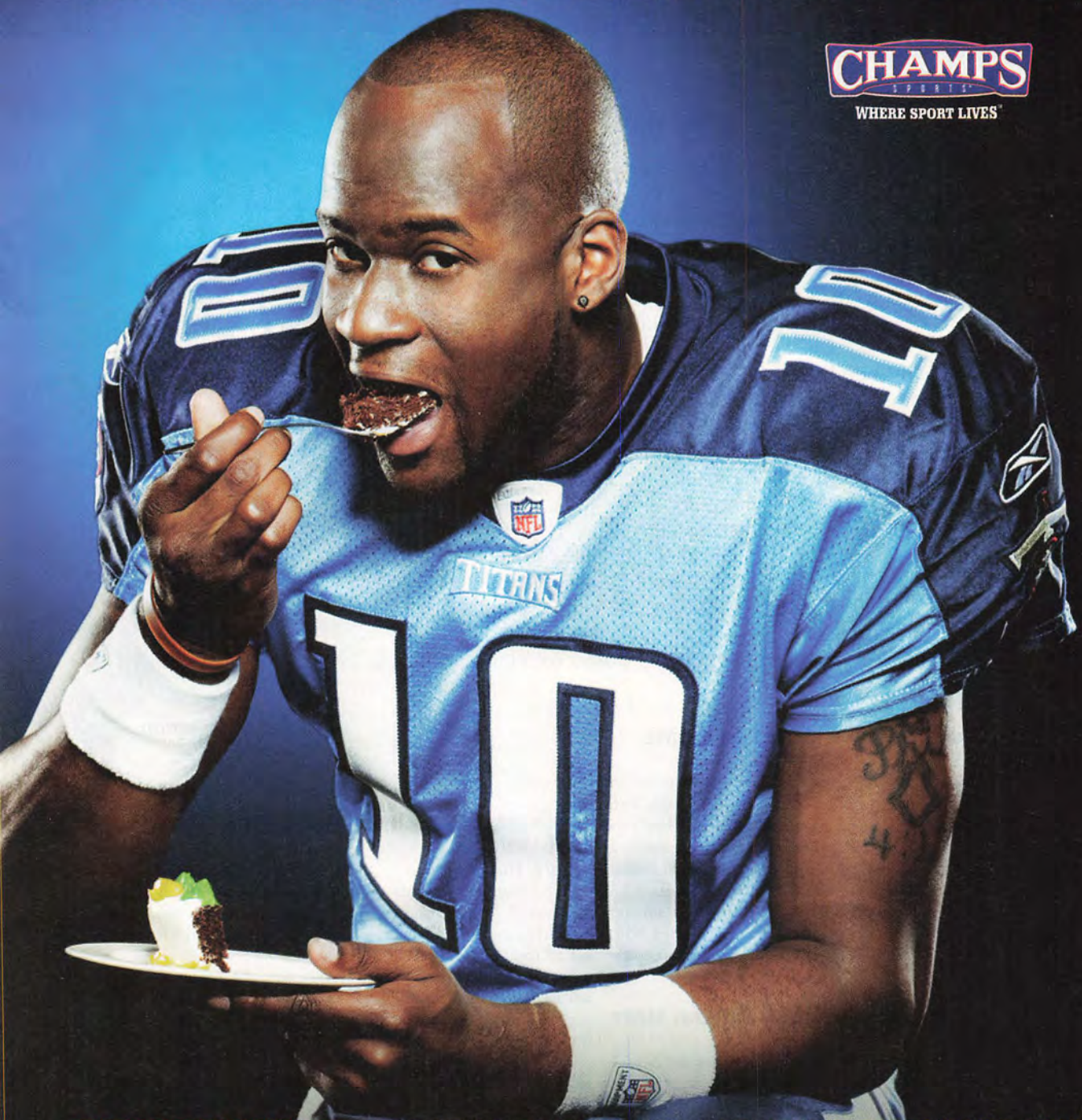

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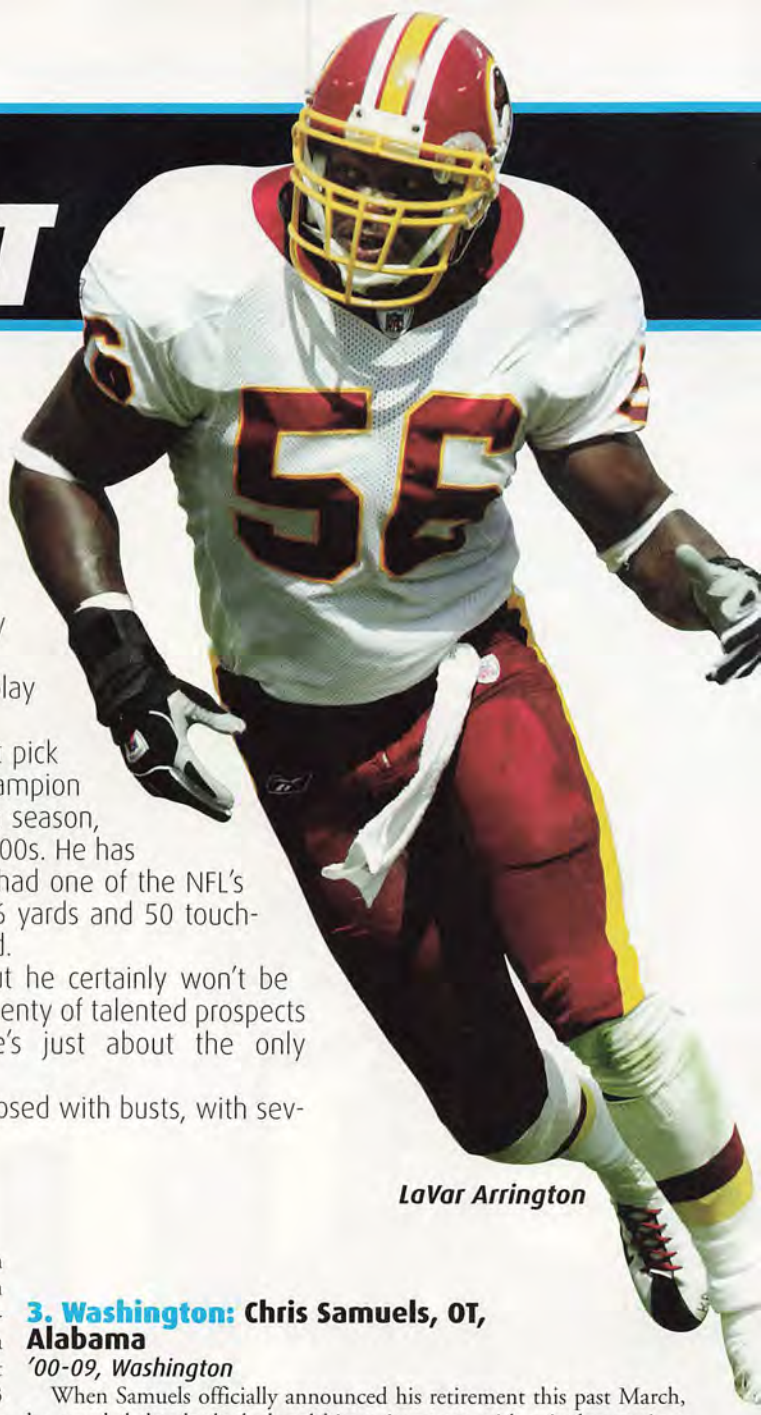
2000 NFL DRAFT REVISITED

by Jake Veyhl



LaVar Arrington

Even at the time, it didn't appear that there was a future Super Bowl champion quarterback in the 2000 NFL Draft. 1999 had been the year of the quarterback. This was not. In fact, teams were so disinterested in the quarterback crop that Chad Pennington was the only one taken in the first 64 selections.

Turns out there was a guy from Michigan who could play a little ball, too.

Yes, Tom Brady proved to be the steal of all steals at pick No. 199 in the 2000 draft. A three-time Super Bowl champion and the NFL's record-holder for touchdown passes in a season, Brady transformed the Patriots into the dynasty of the '00s. He has never quarterbacked a team with a losing record and had one of the NFL's all-time great seasons in '07 when he threw for 4,806 yards and 50 touchdowns en route to a perfect 16–0 regular-season record.

Brady might have been overlooked in the draft, but he certainly won't be missed on Hall of Fame ballots. And while there were plenty of talented prospects who entered the NFL with him that season, he's just about the only reason the 2000 draft is memorable.

As such, it's no surprise the first round opened and closed with busts, with several more in between.

1. Cleveland: Courtney Brown, DE, Penn State

'00-04, Cleveland; '05, Denver

The selection of Brown meant that the Browns actually whiffed on two consecutive No. 1 overall picks — they took quarterback Tim Couch in 1999. Brown made an immediate impact on a club that finished 2–14 and dead last in sacks a year prior, starting all 16 games as a rookie, recording 4.5 sacks and helping the club move up to 13th in that category. Injuries took over from there, though, as Brown missed 33 games with a variety of ailments from 2001-04. Microfracture surgery during Denver's 2006 preseason camp ended his career. Finished NFL career with 19 sacks in 61 games — only 5.5 more than he recorded during his senior season at Penn State.

2. Washington: LaVar Arrington, OLB, Penn State

'00-05, Washington; '06, N.Y. Giants

This was only the third time in NFL Draft history that the Nos. 1 and 2 picks came from the same school, and Arrington lived up to his draft status only slightly longer than Brown. He earned Pro Bowl honors from '01-03, tying for ninth in the NFL with 11.0 sacks in '02. Disputes with the new Joe Gibbs regime in Washington and a knee injury began to take a toll on Arrington's playing time and effectiveness. He bought out his own contract and landed with the Giants in '06, but a ruptured Achilles' tendon six games into the season coupled with a summer motorcycle accident ended his career. Has been involved in the restaurant and clothing businesses and is a regular in broadcasting; he hosts "The LaVar Arrington Show with Chad Dukes" on radio in Washington, D.C.

3. Washington: Chris Samuels, OT, Alabama

'00-09, Washington

When Samuels officially announced his retirement this past March, he revealed that he had played his entire career with spinal stenosis, a condition that could have caused him to be paralyzed with one wrong hit to the head. That knowledge makes his professional résumé even more impressive. A six-time Pro Bowler, Samuels was one of the premier left tackles of the decade. Played in all but eight games during his first nine seasons and carried a reputation as one of the true gentlemen in the league.

4. Cincinnati: Peter Warrick, WR, Florida State

'00-04, Cincinnati; '05, Seattle

Unlike in college, Warrick never became a star in the NFL. He played five seasons for Bengals teams that never posted a winning record. He led the club in receiving yards (592) his rookie season and posted a career-high 819 in '03. Leg and shin injuries in '04 opened his No. 2 role for T.J. Houshmandzadeh, and the Bengals released Warrick after the season. Served as a reserve receiver and punt returner for the NFC champion Seahawks in '05, his last season in the league. Post-NFL career included short stints in the AFL, CFL and Indoor Football League.

Arrington: Brad Schloss; Brady: Chris Bernacchi; Urlacher: Steve Woltmann

Best Sleepers

1. Tom Brady, QB, Michigan,
Round 6, pick 199 (Patriots)

2. Adalius Thomas, DE, Southern Miss,
Round 6, pick 186 (Ravens)

3. Marc Bulger, QB, West Virginia,
Round 6, pick 168 (Saints)

4. Kabeer Gbaja-Biamila, DE, San Diego State,
Round 5, pick 149 (Packers)

5. Dante Hall, WR/KR, Texas A&M,
Round 5, pick 153 (Chiefs)

6. Adewale Ogunleye, DE, Indiana,
undrafted (Dolphins)

5. Baltimore: Jamal Lewis, RB, Tennessee
'00-06, Baltimore; '07-09, Cleveland

Lewis has been a highly productive and durable NFL back. One of only 24 players to reach 10,000 career rushing yards (10,607), Lewis also claims the second-most yards in a single season with 2,066 in '03. Rushed for over 1,000 yards seven times and, until last year, never had fewer than 235 carries in a season. Piled up 1,364 yards as a rookie for Super Bowl XXXV-winning Ravens. Served a four-month prison term in '05 after pleading guilty to trying to set up a cocaine deal four-and-a-half years prior. Released by the Browns following an injury-plagued '09 season.

6. Philadelphia: Corey Simon, DT, Florida State
'00-04, Philadelphia; '05, Indianapolis; '07, Tennessee

Simon's tenure with the Eagles coincided with the team's five consecutive seasons of 11 or more wins and resulted in four trips to the NFC Championship Game. Simon was a little smaller than the typical defensive tackle but was quick off the ball. Broke Eagles' rookie record for sacks with 9.5 and added 22.5 more over his next four seasons. Contract squabbles and the Eagles' lack of belief in his commitment level resulted in his release after the '04 season. Signed by Colts to a lucrative offer but produced little when an already-lackluster '05 season ended with a knee injury that also kept him out in '06. Played four games with the Titans before retiring due to polyarthritis.

7. Arizona: Thomas Jones, RB, Virginia
'00-02, Arizona; '03, Tampa Bay; '04-06, Chicago; '07-09, N.Y. Jets; present, Kansas City

Unlike most running backs, Jones has posted his best years since he turned 26. It took his career a few years to take off due to injuries and split-backfield situations, but since he signed with the Bears, there's been no looking back. Rushed for 3,493 yards and 22 touchdowns in three seasons in Chicago and 3,833 yards with 28 scores in three seasons with the Jets. Recorded his fifth consecutive 1,100-yard effort in '09 and is less than 800 yards shy of 10,000 career rushing yards. Will have a chance to reach that mark after signing a two-year deal with the Chiefs.

8. Pittsburgh: Plaxico Burress, WR, Michigan State
'00-04, Pittsburgh; '05-08, N.Y. Giants

The guy who caught the game-winning pass in Super Bowl XLII is now better known for shooting himself in the thigh in a New York nightclub late in '08. He's serving a two-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to violating the state's gun control laws. Before that, Burress was considered one of the better receivers in the league. Had a pair of 1,000-yard seasons for both the Giants and Steelers and is sitting on 7,845 yards and 55 touchdowns in 128 games.

9. Chicago: Brian Urlacher, MLB, New Mexico
'00-present, Chicago

Urlacher's likable personality and excellent skills and instincts quickly made him the face of the Bears' franchise. One of the finest linebackers of the decade, Urlacher fit perfectly in the club's Tampa 2 defense after playing the hybrid linebacker-safety position at New Mexico. Went to six Pro Bowls in his first seven seasons. Injuries (leg, wrist, neck, back) have been the only thing to hold him back.

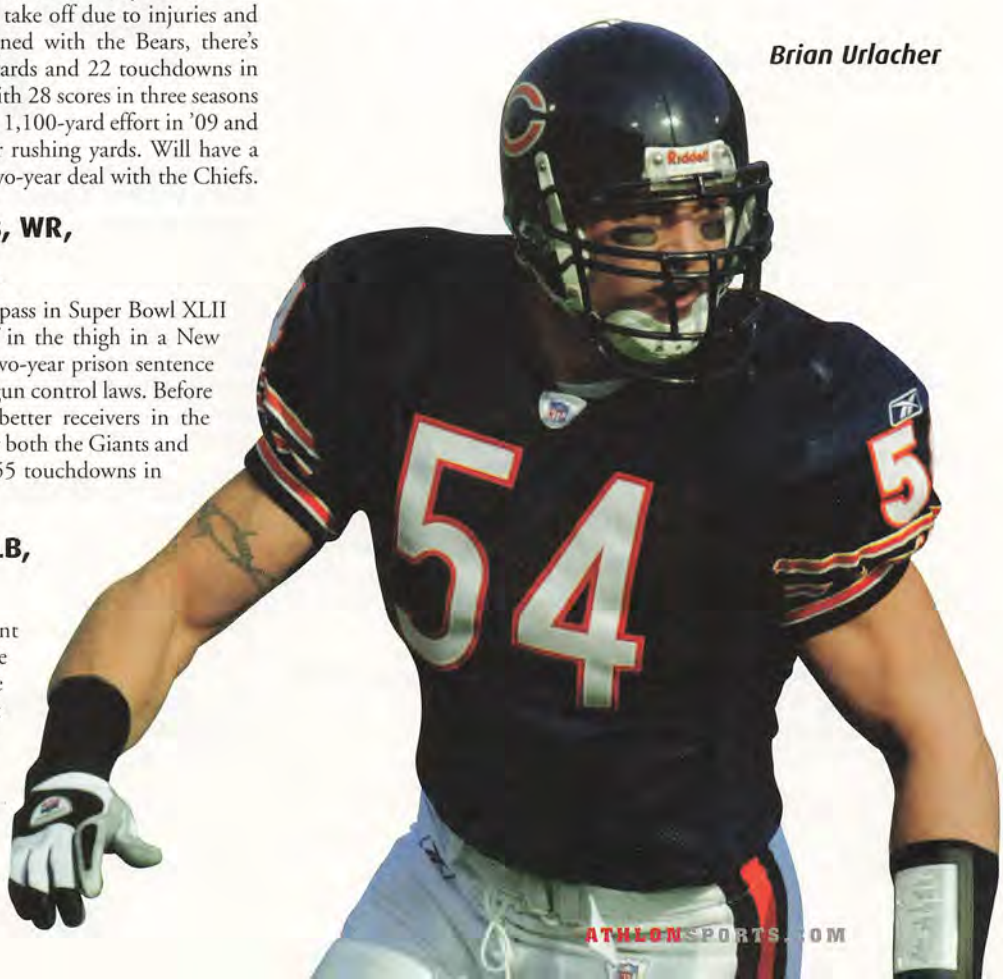
10. Baltimore: Travis Taylor, WR, Florida
'00-04, Baltimore; '05-06, Minnesota; '07, St. Louis, Oakland, Carolina; '08, Detroit

Though a steady receiver, Taylor never made a big impact. Recorded 2,758 yards in five seasons with the Ravens and 1,255 yards in two season for the Vikings.

11. N.Y. Giants: Ron Dayne, RB, Wisconsin
'00-04, N.Y. Giants; '05, Denver; '06-07, Houston

College football's all-time leading rusher didn't have the same impact in the NFL. Earned fame as the "Thunder" portion of the Giants' "Thunder and Lightning" backfield during the early portion of the decade but never became a feature back. Started only 28 of his 96 career games and only once (as a rookie) received more than 200 carries.

Brian Urlacher



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12. N.Y. Jets: Shaun Ellis, DE, Tennessee
'00-present, N.Y. Jets

The first of four first-round picks for the Jets, Ellis remains the longest-tenured player on the club. He is a reliable player who has missed consecutive games only once in his career (2005). Though he has been voted into the Pro Bowl only once, his impact on the Jets was strong from the start. Best years came in '03 (Pro Bowl) and '04, when he recorded 12.5 and 11.0 sacks, respectively.

13. N.Y. Jets: John Abraham, DE, South Carolina
'00-05, N.Y. Jets, '06-present, Atlanta

Abraham has had a consistent pattern of having a down year every third season ('00, '03, '06, '09). In between those campaigns, he has been one of the league's best ends. Was voted to three Pro Bowls in his first five seasons. Was traded after the '05 season to Atlanta, where he has had two double-digit sack seasons, including a career-high 16.5 in '08. Is signed through 2011 — good news for the Falcons if his trend of good-bad seasons continues.

Best Overall Draft

There were a few teams that found multiple impact players in this draft **(Redskins, Ravens)**, and one that grabbed the best overall player but little else **(Patriots)**, but the draft's best class was assembled by the **Jets**. All four first-round picks **(Shaun Ellis, John Abraham, Chad Pennington, Anthony Becht)** are still in the league, and the Jets hit on third-round wide receiver **Laveranues Coles**. Though the club never advanced past the divisional playoff round until '09, when only Ellis remained, the Jets certainly got the pieces to accomplish more.

14. Green Bay: Bubba Franks, TE, Miami (Fla.)
'00-07, Green Bay; '08, N.Y. Jets

Franks never put up Tony Gonzalez-type receiving numbers, but his three consecutive Pro Bowl appearances in the '01-03 seasons are good indicators of his value to the Packers. Averaged 34 receptions for 310 yards and four touchdowns during his seven seasons as a starter before getting beat out by Donald Lee in '07. Injuries started to get the best of him his final two seasons.

15. Denver: Deltha O'Neal, CB, California
'00-03, Denver; '04-07, Cincinnati; '08, New England

O'Neal didn't become a full-time starter in the secondary until his second season, but the Broncos had him returning kicks as a rookie and punts all four seasons with the club. Wasn't bad as a corner, either. Reached the Pro Bowl in '01 and '05 with nine and 10 interceptions, respectively, and finished his career with six touchdowns (three interceptions, two punt returns, one kickoff).

16. San Francisco: Julian Peterson, OLB, Michigan State
'00-05, San Francisco; '06-08, Seattle; '09-present, Detroit

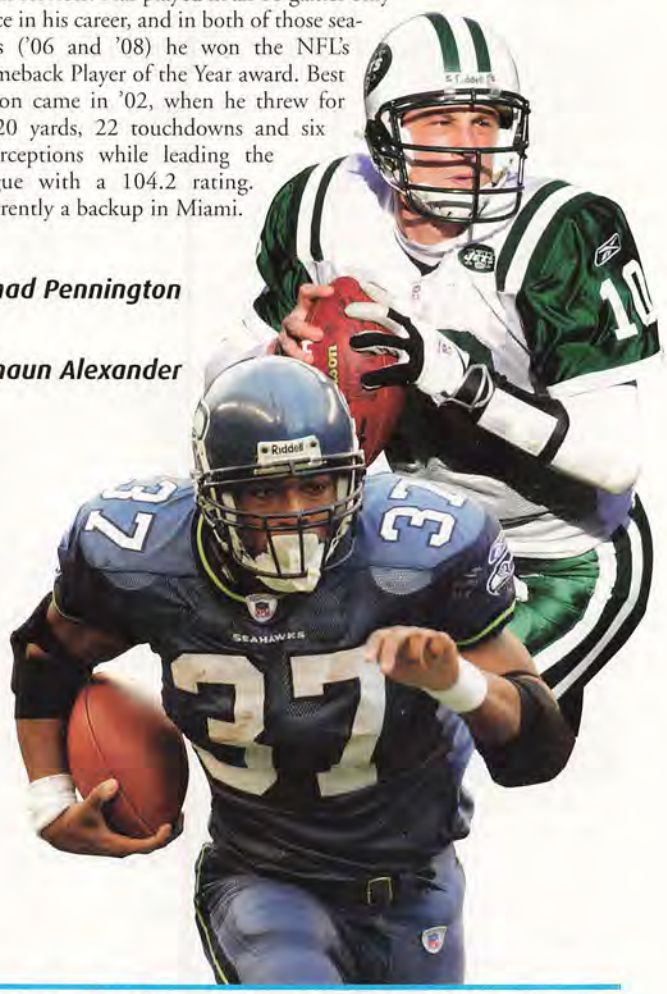
Peterson has developed into one of the league's better hybrid players at the linebacker-end position. A five-time Pro Bowler (twice with the 49ers, three times with the Seahawks), Peterson has recorded 50.5 sacks and 21 forced fumbles in his career.

17. Oakland: Sebastian Janikowski, K, Florida State
'00-present, Oakland

Al Davis pulled the stunner of the draft by selecting a kicker 17th overall. While Janikowski has had a good career, there's no way he could have lived up to his draft selection. Has made 78.4 percent of his field goals (229-of-292) and 313-of-316 extra points. Is 25-for-49 on attempts of 50-plus yards, including a 61-yarder last season. Signed a four-year, $16 million deal this offseason.

18. N.Y. Jets: Chad Pennington, QB, Marshall
'00-07, N.Y. Jets; '08-present, Miami

Injuries and inconsistent play have prevented Pennington's career from taking off, but his talent and experience have kept teams interested in his services. Has played in all 16 games only twice in his career, and in both of those seasons ('06 and '08) he won the NFL's Comeback Player of the Year award. Best season came in '02, when he threw for 3,120 yards, 22 touchdowns and six interceptions while leading the league with a 104.2 rating. Currently a backup in Miami.



Chad Pennington

Shaun Alexander

19. Seattle: Shaun Alexander, RB, Alabama
'00-07, Seattle; '08, Washington

After 10 years, the 2000 draft has produced two MVPs. One was Tom Brady. Alexander earned the other in '05 when he rushed for 1,880 yards and tied the then-single-season record of 27 rushing touchdowns. That was the fourth season in which he topped 1,300 rushing yards, and at the time he was widely considered one of the league's best backs. A string of injuries began with a broken foot in '06, though, and he was never the same. Ended his career with 10,973 yards from scrimmage and 112 total touchdowns.

20. Detroit: Stockar McDougle, OT, Oklahoma
'00-04, Detroit; '05, Miami; '06, Jacksonville

The Lions continued their string of misses on first-round selections with McDougle, who didn't become a full-time starter until his fourth season. He started all 16 games during the '03 and '04 seasons with the Lions, then contributed to Miami and Jacksonville as a reserve and on special teams.

21. Kansas City: Sylvester Morris, WR, Jackson State
'00, Kansas City

Morris' promise showed during his first and only season in the NFL, when he caught a Chiefs rookie-record 48 passes for 678 yards and three touchdowns. He didn't play another down in the league, though, due to repeated knee injuries.

Pennington: Paul Jasienski; Alexander: Otto Greule Jr/Getty Images

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22. Seattle: Chris McIntosh, OT, Wisconsin
'00-01, Seattle

Another injury-plagued draftee, McIntosh played only two seasons in the NFL. A neck stinger sustained in '01 camp limited him to only three starts that season. Retired when the Seahawks released him in '03. Currently works as a real estate agent in Waukesha, Wis.

23. Carolina: Rashard Anderson, FS, Jackson State
'00-01, Carolina

Unlike the previous two picks, Anderson's quick exit from the league was not injury-related. He was suspended for violating the league's substance abuse policy. Was reinstated in '04, but no NFL team gave him a second chance. Played briefly for the Calgary Stampeders of the CFL.

24. San Francisco: Ahmed Plummer, CB, Ohio State
'00-05, San Francisco

Considered one of the league's better cover corners after his fourth season, Plummer signed a new five-year contract but ended up playing only nine more games in the final two years of his career due to neck, shoulder and ankle injuries. Missed only three games in his first four seasons, recording 12 interceptions.

Worst Overall Draft

It feels like piling on, but hey, there's a reason they've been to the playoffs only once since rejoining the league in '99. Yes, the worst draft belonged to the **Browns**, who got very little mileage out of their six picks in the first four rounds, including No. 1 overall. Aside from **Courtney Brown's** one solid season and seven decent years from part-time starting receiver **Dennis Northcutt**, Cleveland got enough non-impact players to drive multiple coaches mad.

25. Minnesota: Chris Hovan, DT, Boston College
'00-04, Minnesota; '05-present, Tampa Bay

Hovan has carved out a solid but unspectacular career during his 10 years as a pro. Though he has never been to a Pro Bowl, Hovan is consistent and dependable. He has played in all 16 games eight times in his career and been a starter since his rookie season.

26. Buffalo: Erik Flowers, DE, Arizona State
'00-01, Buffalo; '02, Houston; '03-04, St. Louis

Flowers' short stint in the league was spent mainly as a reserve. Started six games for the Bills in '01 but returned to backup role and then was released after the season. Recorded only four sacks in Buffalo and added one more in '04 with the Rams. Currently owns a Marble Slab Creamery franchise in Boerne, Texas.

27. N.Y. Jets: Anthony Becht, TE, West Virginia
'00-04, N.Y. Jets; '05-07, Tampa Bay; '08, St. Louis; '09-present, Arizona

Becht began his career as a receiving tight end but remains in the league because of his blocking. In his first four seasons, Becht totaled 120 receptions for 1,064 yards and 16 touchdowns but hasn't topped 115 yards in a single season since. Still, he has contributed as a blocker for seven 1,000-yard rushing seasons in his career.

28. Indianapolis: Rob Morris, LB, BYU
'00-07, Indianapolis

Injuries created several peaks and valleys in Morris' career. He sustained a ruptured quad before his rookie season but played the next four years as a full-time starter at middle linebacker before being relegated to special teams. Moved back into the starting lineup at left outside linebacker during the Colts' Super Bowl-winning season but finally retired after finishing '07 on the IR.

29. Jacksonville: R. Jay Soward, WR, USC
'00-01, Jacksonville

The speedy but troubled receiver caught 14 passes for 154 yards and one score during his first and only year on the field. The Jags suspended him for all but one game in '01, and the NFL eventually banished him for failing multiple drug and alcohol tests. Moved in and out of rehab for several years but reappeared in the CFL for the Toronto Argonauts from '04-06.

Keith Bulluck

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

30. Tennessee: Keith Bulluck, LB, Syracuse
'00-09, Tennessee

Bulluck became the face of the franchise and emotional leader of the defense during his decade with the Titans. Possibly one of the more underrated players of the decade, he made 127 consecutive starts at linebacker before a torn ACL ended his season after 14 games in '09. With his contract expired, Bulluck's status is up in the air.

31. St. Louis: Trung Canidate, RB, Arizona
'00-02, St. Louis; '03-04, Washington

Canidate was a curious pick as the Rams had acquired Marshall Faulk the year before. Canidate started only three games in his Rams career and was traded to Washington, where he rushed for 600 yards in '03 and spent all of his final season in the league on the inactive list with a foot injury.

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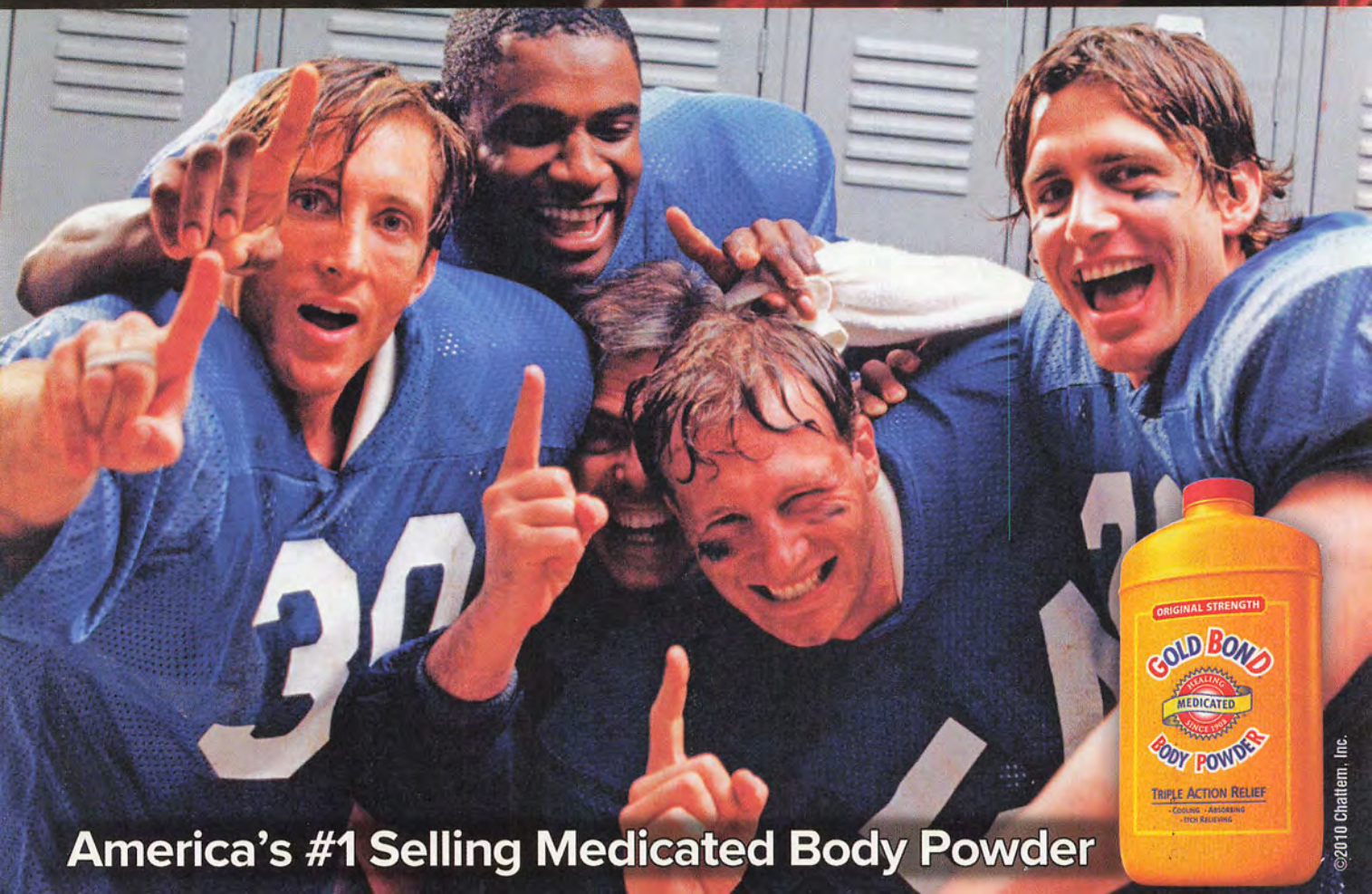

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DRAFT 2010 RECAP

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ROUND 1

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	1	Rams	Sam Bradford	QB	Oklahoma
2	2	Lions	Ndamukong Suh	DT	Nebraska
3	3	Bucs	Gerald McCoy	DT	Oklahoma
4	4	Redskins	Trent Williams	OT	Oklahoma
5	5	Chiefs	Eric Berry	S	Tennessee
6	6	Seahawks	Russell Okung	OT	Oklahoma State
7	7	Browns	Joe Haden	CB	Florida
8	8	Raiders	Rolando McClain	LB	Alabama
9	9	Bills	C.J. Spiller	RB	Clemson
10	10	Jaguars	Tyson Alualu	DT	California
11	11	49ers	Anthony Davis	OT	Rutgers
12	12	Chargers	Ryan Mathews	RB	Fresno State
13	13	Eagles	Brandon Graham	DE	Michigan
14	14	Seahawks	Earl Thomas	S	Texas
15	15	Giants	Jason Pierre-Paul	DE	South Florida
16	16	Titans	Derrick Morgan	DE	Georgia Tech
17	17	49ers	Mike Iupati	G	Idaho
18	18	Steelers	Maurkice Pouncey	C	Florida
19	19	Falcons	Sean Weatherspoon	LB	Missouri
20	20	Texans	Kareem Jackson	CB	Alabama
21	21	Bengals	Jermaine Gresham	TE	Oklahoma
22	22	Broncos	Demaryius Thomas	WR	Georgia Tech
23	23	Packers	Bryan Bulaga	OT	Iowa
24	24	Cowboys	Dez Bryant	WR	Oklahoma State
25	25	Broncos	Tim Tebow	QB	Florida
26	26	Cardinals	Dan Williams	DT	Tennessee
27	27	Patriots	Devin McCourty	CB	Rutgers
28	28	Dolphins	Jared Odrick	DT	Penn State
29	29	Jets	Kyle Wilson	CB	Boise State
30	30	Lions	Jahvid Best	RB	California
31	31	Colts	Jerry Hughes	DE	TCU
32	32	Saints	Patrick Robinson	CB	Florida State

ROUND 2

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	33	Rams	Rodger Saffold	OT	Indiana
2	34	Vikings	Chris Cook	CB	Virginia
3	35	Bucs	Brian Price	DT	UCLA
4	36	Chiefs	Dexter McCluster	RB	Ole Miss
5	37	Eagles	Nate Allen	S	South Florida
6	38	Browns	T.J. Ward	S	Oregon
7	39	Bucs	Arrelious Benn	WR	Illinois
8	40	Dolphins	Koa Misi	DE	Utah
9	41	Bills	Torell Troup	DT	UCF
10	42	Patriots	Rob Gronkowski	TE	Arizona
11	43	Ravens	Sergio Kindle	LB	Texas
12	44	Raiders	Lamarr Houston	DT	Texas
13	45	Broncos	Zane Beadles	OT	Utah
14	46	Giants	Linval Joseph	DT	East Carolina
15	47	Cardinals	Daryl Washington	LB	TCU
16	48	Panthers	Jimmy Clausen	QB	Notre Dame
17	49	49ers	Taylor Mays	S	USC
18	50	Chiefs	Javier Arenas	CB	Alabama
19	51	Vikings	Toby Gerhart	RB	Stanford
20	52	Steelers	Jason Worilds	DE	Virginia Tech
21	53	Patriots	Jermaine Cunningham	DE	Florida
22	54	Bengals	Carlos Dunlap	DE	Florida
23	55	Cowboys	Sean Lee	LB	Penn State
24	56	Packers	Mike Neal	DT	Purdue
25	57	Ravens	Terrence Cody	DT	Alabama
26	58	Texans	Ben Tate	RB	Auburn
27	59	Browns	Montario Hardesty	RB	Tennessee
28	60	Seahawks	Golden Tate	WR	Notre Dame
29	61	Jets	Vladimir Ducasse	OT	Massachusetts
30	62	Patriots	Brandon Spikes	LB	Florida
31	63	Colts	Pat Angerer	LB	Iowa
32	64	Saints	Charles Brown	OT	USC

ROUND 3

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	65	Rams	Jerome Murphy	CB	South Florida
2	66	Lions	Amari Spievey	CB	Iowa
3	67	Bucs	Myron Lewis	CB	Vanderbilt
4	68	Chiefs	Jon Asamoah	G	Illinois
5	69	Raiders	Jared Veldheer	OT	Hillsdale
6	70	Ravens	Ed Dickson	TE	Oregon
7	71	Packers	Morgan Burnett	S	Georgia Tech
8	72	Bills	Alex Carrington	DE	Arkansas State
9	73	Dolphins	John Jerry	OT	Ole Miss
10	74	Jaguars	D'Anthony Smith	DT	Louisiana Tech
11	75	Bears	Major Wright	S	Florida
12	76	Giants	Chad Jones	S	LSU
13	77	Titans	Damian Williams	WR	USC
14	78	Panthers	Brandon LaFell	WR	LSU
15	79	Chargers	Donald Butler	LB	Washington
16	80	Broncos	J.D. Walton	C	Baylor
17	81	Texans	Earl Mitchell	DT	Arizona
18	82	Steelers	Emmanuel Sanders	WR	SMU
19	83	Falcons	Corey Peters	DT	Kentucky
20	84	Bengals	Jordan Shipley	WR	Texas
21	85	Browns	Colt McCoy	QB	Texas
22	86	Eagles	Daniel Te'o-Nesheim	DE	Washington
23	87	Broncos	Eric Decker	WR	Minnesota
24	88	Cardinals	Andre Roberts	WR	The Citadel
25	89	Panthers	Armanti Edwards	QB	Appalachian State
26	90	Patriots	Taylor Price	WR	Ohio
27	91	49ers	Navorro Bowman	LB	Penn State
28	92	Browns	Shawn Lauvao	G	Arizona State
29	93	Chiefs	Tony Moeaki	TE	Iowa
30	94	Colts	Kevin Thomas	CB	USC
31	95	Saints	Jimmy Graham	TE	Miami
32	96	Bengals *	Brandon Ghee	CB	Wake Forest
33	97	Titans *	Rennie Curran	LB	Georgia
34	98	Falcons *	Mike Johnson	G	Alabama

ROUND 4

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	99	Rams	Mardy Gilyard	WR	Cincinnati
2	100	Vikings	Everson Griffen	DE	USC
3	101	Bucs	Mike Williams	WR	Syracuse
4	102	Texans	Darryl Sharpton	LB	Miami
5	103	Redskins	Perry Riley	LB	LSU
6	104	Titans	Alterraun Verner	CB	UCLA
7	105	Eagles	Trevard Lindley	CB	Kentucky
8	106	Raiders	Bruce Campbell	OT	Maryland
9	107	Bills	Marcus Easley	WR	Connecticut
10	108	Raiders	Jacoby Ford	WR	Clemson
11	109	Bears	Corey Wootton	DE	Northwestern
12	110	Chargers	Darrell Stuckey	S	Kansas
13	111	Seahawks	Walter Thurmond	CB	Oregon
14	112	Jets	Joe McKnight	RB	USC
15	113	Patriots	Aaron Hernandez	TE	Florida
16	114	Ravens	Dennis Pitta	TE	BYU
17	115	Giants	Phillip Dillard	LB	Nebraska
18	116	Steelers	Thaddeus Gibson	DE	Ohio State
19	117	Falcons	Joe Hawley	G	UNLV
20	118	Texans	Garrett Graham	TE	Wisconsin
21	119	Dolphins	A.J. Edds	LB	Iowa
22	120	Bengals	Geno Atkins	DT	Georgia
23	121	Eagles	Keenan Clayton	LB	Oklahoma
24	122	Eagles	Mike Kafka	QB	Northwestern
25	123	Saints	Al Woods	DT	LSU
26	124	Panthers	Eric Norwood	LB	South Carolina
27	125	Eagles	Clay Harbor	TE	Missouri State
28	126	Cowboys	Akwasi Owusu-Ansah	CB	Indiana (Pa.)
29	127	Seahawks	E.J. Wilson	DE	North Carolina

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	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
30	128	Lions	Jason Fox	OT	Miami
31	129	Colts	Jacques McClendon	G	Tennessee
32	130	Cardinals	O'Brien Schofield	DE	Wisconsin
33	131	Bengals *	Roddrick Muckelroy	LB	Texas

ROUND 5

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	132	Rams	Michael Hoomanawanui	TE	Illinois
2	133	Seahawks	Kam Chancellor	S	Virginia Tech
3	134	Eagles	Ricky Sapp	DE	Clemson
4	135	Falcons	Dominique Franks	CB	Oklahoma
5	136	Chiefs	Kendrick Lewis	S	Ole Miss
6	137	Broncos	Perrish Cox	CB	Oklahoma State
7	138	Raiders	Walter McFadden	CB	Auburn
8	139	Jets	John Conner	RB	Kentucky
9	140	Bills	Ed Wang	OT	Virginia Tech
10	141	Bears	Joshua Moore	CB	Kansas State
11	142	Chiefs	Cameron Sheffield	DE	Troy
12	143	Jaguars	Larry Hart	DE	Central Arkansas
13	144	Texans	Sherrick McManis	CB	Northwestern
14	145	Dolphins	Nolan Carroll	CB	Maryland
15	146	Chargers	Cam Thomas	DT	North Carolina
16	147	Giants	Mitch Petrus	G	Arkansas
17	148	Titans	Robert Johnson	S	Utah
18	149	Rams	Hall Davis	DE	UL Lafayette
19	150	Patriots	Zoltan Mesko	P	Michigan
20	151	Steelers	Chris Scott	OT	Tennessee
21	152	Bengals	Otis Hudson	G	Eastern Illinois
22	153	Jaguars	Austen Lane	DE	Murray State
23	154	Packers	Andrew Quarless	TE	Penn State
24	155	Cardinals	John Skelton	QB	Fordham
25	156	Ravens	David Reed	WR	Utah
26	157	Ravens	Art Jones	DT	Syracuse
27	158	Saints	Matt Tennant	C	Boston College
28	159	Eagles	Riley Cooper	WR	Florida
29	160	Browns	Larry Asante	S	Nebraska
30	161	Vikings	Chris Degeare	OT	Wake Forest
31	162	Colts	Brody Eldridge	TE	Oklahoma
32	163	Dolphins	Reshad Jones	S	Georgia
33	164	Steelers *	Crezdon Butler	CB	Clemson
34	165	Falcons *	Kerry Meier	WR	Kansas
35	166	Steelers *	Stevenson Sylvester	LB	Utah
36	167	Vikings *	Nathan Triplett	LB	Minnesota
37	168	Chargers *	Jonathan Crompton	QB	Tennessee
38	169	Packers *	Marshall Newhouse	OT	TCU

ROUND 6

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	170	Rams	Fendi Onobun	TE	Arizona
2	171	Falcons	Shann Schillinger	S	Montana
3	172	Bucs	Brent Bowden	P	Virginia Tech
4	173	49ers	Anthony Dixon	RB	Mississippi State
5	174	Redskins	Dennis Morris	TE	Louisiana Tech
6	175	Panthers	Greg Hardy	DE	Ole Miss
7	176	Titans	Rusty Smith	QB	Florida Atlantic
8	177	Browns	Carlton Mitchell	WR	South Florida
9	178	Bills	Arthur Moats	DE	James Madison
10	179	Cowboys	Sam Young	OT	Notre Dame
11	180	Jaguars	Deji Karim	RB	Southern Illinois
12	181	Bears	Dan LeFevour	QB	Central Michigan
13	182	49ers	Nate Byham	TE	Pittsburgh
14	183	Broncos	Eric Olsen	C	Notre Dame
15	184	Giants	Adrian Tracy	DE	William & Mary
16	185	Seahawks	Anthony McCoy	TE	USC
17	186	Browns	Clifton Geathers	DE	South Carolina
18	187	Texans	Shelley Smith	G	Colorado State
19	188	Steelers	Jonathan Dwyer	RB	Georgia Tech
20	189	Rams	Eugene Sims	DE	West Texas A&M
21	190	Raiders	Travis Goethel	LB	Arizona State
22	191	Bengals	Dezmon Briscoe	WR	Kansas
23	192	Bills	Danny Batten	DE	South Dakota State
24	193	Packers	James Starks	RB	Buffalo
25	194	Ravens	Ramon Harewood	OT	Morehouse
26	195	Steelers	Antonio Brown	WR	Central Michigan
27	196	Cowboys	Jamar Wall	CB	Texas Tech
28	197	Texans	Trindon Holliday	KR	LSU
29	198	Panthers	David Gettis	WR	Baylor
30	199	Vikings	Joe Webb	QB	UAB
31	200	Eagles	Charles Scott	RB	LSU
32	201	Cardinals	Jorrick Calvin	CB	Troy
33	202	Panthers *	Jordan Pugh	S	Texas A&M
34	203	Jaguars *	Scott McGee	KR	James Madison
35	204	Panthers *	Tony Pike	QB	Cincinnati
36	205	Patriots *	Ted Larsen	G	NC State
37	206	49ers *	Kyle Williams	WR	Arizona State
38	207	Titans *	Myron Rolle	S	Florida State

ROUND 7

	NO.	TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	COLLEGE
1	208	Patriots	Thomas Welch	OT	Vanderbilt
2	209	Bills	Levi Brown	QB	Troy
3	210	Bucs	Cody Grimm	LB	Virginia Tech
4	211	Rams	Marquis Johnson	CB	Alabama
5	212	Dolphins	Chris McCoy	DE	Middle Tennessee
6	213	Lions	Willie Young	DE	NC State
7	214	Vikings	Mickey Shuler	TE	Penn State
8	215	Raiders	Jeremy Ware	CB	Michigan State
9	216	Bills	Kyle Calloway	OT	Iowa
10	217	Bucs	Dekoda Watson	LB	Florida State
11	218	Bears	J'Marcus Webb	OT	West Texas A&M
12	219	Redskins	Terrence Austin	WR	UCLA
13	220	Eagles	Jamar Chaney	LB	Mississippi State
14	221	Giants	Matt Dodge	P	East Carolina
15	222	Titans	Marc Mariani	WR	Montana
16	223	Panthers	R.J. Stanford	CB	Utah
17	224	49ers	Phillip Adams	CB	South Carolina State
18	225	Broncos	Syd'quan Thompson	CB	California
19	226	Rams	George Selvie	DE	South Florida
20	227	Texans	Dorin Dickerson	TE	Pittsburgh
21	228	Bengals	Reggie Stephens	G	Iowa State
22	229	Redskins	Erik Cook	C	New Mexico
23	230	Packers	C.J. Wilson	DE	East Carolina
24	231	Redskins	Selvish Capers	OT	West Virginia
25	232	Broncos	Jammie Kirlew	DE	Indiana
26	233	Cardinals	Jim Dray	TE	Stanford
27	234	Cowboys	Sean Lissemore	DT	William & Mary
28	235	Chargers	Dedrick Epps	TE	Miami
29	236	Seahawks	Dexter Davis	DE	Arizona State
30	237	Vikings	Ryan D'Imperio	LB	Rutgers
31	238	Colts	Ricardo Mathews	DT	Cincinnati
32	239	Saints	Sean Canfield	QB	Oregon State
33	240	Colts *	Kavell Conner	LB	Clemson
34	241	Titans *	David Howard	DT	Brown
35	242	Steelers *	Doug Worthington	DT	Ohio State
36	243	Eagles *	Jeff Owens	DT	Georgia
37	244	Eagles *	Kurt Coleman	S	Ohio State
38	245	Seahawks*	Jameson Konz	WR	Kent State
39	246	Colts *	Ray Fisher	CB	Indiana
40	247	Patriots *	Brandon Deaderick	DE	Alabama
41	248	Patriots *	Kade Weston	DT	Georgia
42	249	Panthers *	Robert McClain	CB	Connecticut
43	250	Patriots *	Zac Robinson	QB	Oklahoma State
44	251	Raiders *	Stevie Brown	S	Michigan
45	252	Dolphins *	Austin Spitler	LB	Ohio State
46	253	Bucs *	Erik Lorig	DE	Stanford
47	254	Rams *	Josh Hull	LB	Penn State
48	255	Lions *	Tim Toone	WR	Weber State

* Compensatory Selection

DRAFT 2010 RECAP

PRESENTED BY Wrangler

by Nathan Rush

Quarterback Class of 2010

This year's crop of quarterbacks might not live up to the Elway-Kelly-Marino Hall of Fame standards of 1983 or the Manning-Rivers-Roethlisberger winning percentages of 2004, but there is still plenty of potential in the pocket of 2010.

Sam Bradford Oklahoma (Rams, 1st overall)
The 2008 Heisman winner overcame injured throwing shoulder to become the new face of the franchise in St. Louis.

Tim Tebow Florida (Broncos, 25th)
The future of Josh McDaniels, who traded Jay Cutler away last year, rides on the development of this Heisman and BCS title-winning Superman.

Jimmy Clausen Notre Dame (Panthers, 48th)
A rumored bad attitude caused Clausen, once thought to be a top-10 talent, to free-fall down the board to the quarterback-starved Panthers.

Colt McCoy Texas (Browns, 85th)
College football's all-time winningest quarterback is accurate but undersized and fresh off a shoulder injury suffered in the BCS title game.

Armanti Edwards Appalachian State (Panthers, 89th)
Two-time Walter Payton Award winner and back-to-back FCS champ is expected to be a receiver, returner and Wildcat option in Charlotte.

Mike Kafka, Northwestern (Eagles, 122nd)
Steps in line behind Kevin Kolb and Michael Vick on the Philly depth chart.

John Skelton Fordham (Cardinals, 155th)
Has Joe Flacco-type size (6'5", 243), a cannon arm and an FCS pedigree.

Jonathan Crompton Tennessee (Chargers, 168th)
Million dollar arm, 10-cent head; he's the Bolts' new Charlie Whitehurst.

Rusty Smith Florida Atlantic (Titans, 176th)
First Howard Schnellenberger Owl ever to be selected in the NFL Draft.

Dan LeFevour Central Michigan (Bears, 181st)
New toy for Mike Martz accounted for the most total touchdowns (149) in NCAA history.

Joe Webb UAB (Vikings, 199th)
Dual-threat quarterback to become a big target (6'3", 223) as Wildcat wideout.

Tony Pike Cincinnati (Panthers, 204th)
Stands tall (6'6") in the pocket but could be an oft-injured "system" quarterback.

Levi Brown Troy (Bills, 209th)
Athletic and accurate with an unorthodox delivery; could be a steal.

Sean Canfield Oregon State (Saints, 239th)
Will learn from two of the best in Drew Brees and coach Sean Payton.

Zac Robinson Oklahoma State (Patriots, 250th)
Going from 40-year-old "man" to nearly 60-year-old evil genius.

Best-Case Scenario

These teams found pay dirt over the three-day draft holiday.

Seattle Seahawks Pete Carroll's first draft included a franchise left tackle (Russell Okung), a ballhawking defensive back (Earl Thomas), a triple-threat receiver-runner-returner (Golden Tate) and a pair of new backs (LenDale White and Leon Washington) via trade.

Baltimore Ravens Along with adding receiver Anquan Boldin via trade, the Ravens reloaded on defense with Sergio Kindle and 350-plus-pound D-tackle Terrence "Mount" Cody.

San Francisco 49ers Iron Mike Singletary is shaping this team in his own image, focusing on paving the way for a strong running game with O-linemen Anthony Davis and Mike Iupati and adding defensive muscle with safety sledgehammer Taylor Mays.

Draft Debates

When a team goes against the grain — by taking a player who was perceived as a lesser prospect than one of his peers — there is always plenty of debate surrounding the pick.

Trent Williams, OT (Redskins, 4th) vs. Russell Okung, OT (Seahawks, 6th)
The Big 12 tackle battle was won by "Silverback" Williams, although most had Okung graded as the top blind-side blocker.

Kareem Jackson, CB (Texans, 20th) vs. Kyle Wilson, CB (Jets, 29th)
The top cover corners for the nation's only undefeated teams, Wilson also brought return skills to the table.

Demaryius Thomas, WR (Broncos, 22nd) vs. Dez Bryant, WR (Cowboys, 24th)
After shipping Brandon Marshall out of town, the Broncos avoided the controversial Bryant, whose family and friends became a sideshow.

Tim Tebow, QB (Broncos, 25th) vs. Jimmy Clausen, QB (Panthers, 48th)
Most assumed Clausen would go in the first round, while Tebow's pre-draft projections were all over the map.

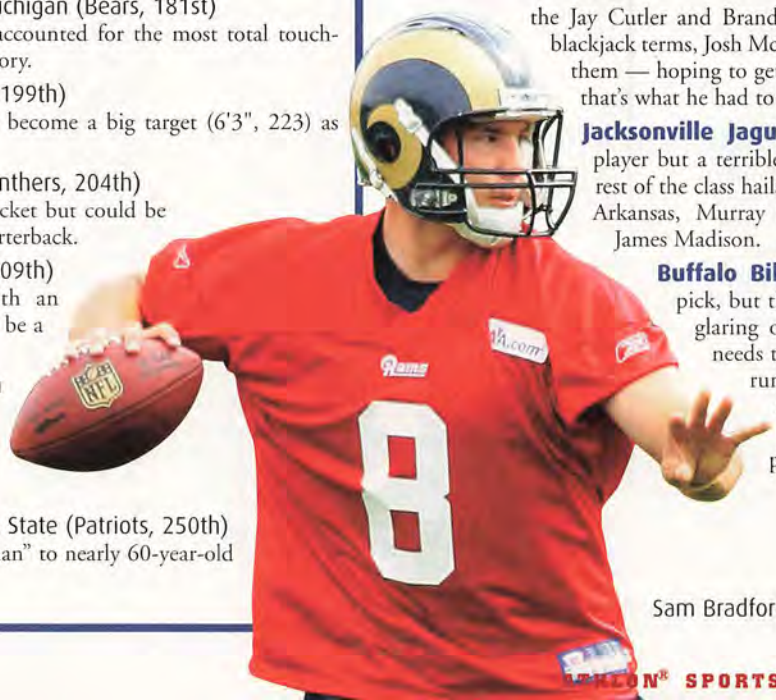
Weakest Links

Winners are built through the draft, but so are losers.

Denver Broncos Tim Tebow and Demaryius Thomas are the Jay Cutler and Brandon Marshall replacements. In blackjack terms, Josh McDaniels got two kings and split them — hoping to get two more kings, even though that's what he had to begin with.

Jacksonville Jaguars Tyson Alualu is a great player but a terrible value at No. 10 overall. The rest of the class hails from Louisiana Tech, Central Arkansas, Murray State, Southern Illinois and James Madison.

Buffalo Bills C.J. Spiller is an exciting pick, but the Bills' braintrust ignored the glaring offensive line and quarterback needs to take their second first-round running back in four years. An attempt to rebuild the D-line was well intentioned but poorly executed.



Sam Bradford

Tim Umphrey/Getty Images

Wrangler
Real. Comfortable. Jeans.

Trade Market

Trading draft picks for proven players can be a safer bet than banking on unproven rookies — or a toxic mortgaging of a franchise's future.

Blue-Chip: Donovan McNabb, QB, Redskins (from Eagles)
Mike Shanahan traded the No. 37 overall pick and a conditional 2011 pick, likely a third-rounder, for a proven Pro Bowl quarterback.

Bubble Buster: Brandon Marshall, WR, Dolphins (from Broncos)
Two second-rounders (2010 and 2011) and a four-year, $47.5 million deal is expensive, even for a high-dollar diva such as minority owner Jennifer Lopez.

Tax Refund: Anquan Boldin, WR, Ravens (from Cardinals)
After trading away this year's third- and fourth-rounders for Boldin, the Warren Buffett of draft day, Ozzie Newsome, recouped his losses in the Broncos' Tim Tebow deal, gaining Nos. 43, 70 and 114 in exchange for No. 25 overall.

Bullish: LenDale White, RB, Seahawks (from Titans)
Pete Carroll reunited with USC's career rushing touchdown leader by moving down seven spots in the fourth round and nine spots in the sixth.

Bearish: Charlie Whitehurst, QB, Seahawks (from Chargers)
A four-year vet with zero career pass attempts cost the Seahawks 20 spots (from No. 40 to No. 60) and a 2011 third-rounder.

Hedge Fund: Antonio Cromartie, CB, Jets (from Chargers)
Santonio Holmes, WR, Jets (from Steelers)
Gang Green is looking for a quick payday, trading a conditional 2011 pick, likely a second-rounder, for Antonio, and a fifth-rounder for Santonio, with hopes of cashing in on a Super Bowl run this year.

Penny Stock: Jason Campbell, QB, Raiders (from Redskins)
The Raiders acquired their new starter from the Redskins for a 2012 fourth-rounder.

Sleeper-Stars

These underrated small-school prospects could develop into Pro Bowlers before it's all said and done.

Vladimir Ducasse OT, Massachusetts (Jets, 61st)
Haitian mauler has size (6'4", 332) and a mean streak to be a road-grader at tackle or guard.

Jared Veldheer OT, Hillsdale (Raiders, 69th)
Division II dancing bear has the frame (6'8", 312) and footwork to eventually play left tackle.

Alex Carrington DE, Arkansas State (Bills, 72nd)
Has the size (6'5", 285) and versatility to line up at end in either a 4-3 or 3-4 scheme.

Akwasi Owusu-Ansah CB, Indiana (Pa.) (Cowboys, 126th)
A big corner (6'0", 207) who will likely move to safety, he's a gambler with return skills.

Ramon Harewood OT, Morehouse (Ravens, 194th)
Athletic Barbados brick wall (6'7", 360) plays volleyball, cricket, rugby, soccer and O-tackle.

David Howard DT, Brown (Titans, 241st)
The only Ivy Leaguer drafted — although the Titans also took Rhodes scholar and safety Myron Rolle — is a monster in the middle.

First-Round Risers

These players started the 2009 college football season as, at best, fringe first-rounders but ultimately heard their names called in prime time on Thursday night.

Tyson Alualu DT, California (Jaguars, 10th)
Unfortunately labeled as the biggest reach in the draft — which he is — the Polynesian playmaker is actually a gifted athlete with a nonstop motor and the flexibility to play anywhere along the D-line.

Ryan Mathews RB, Fresno State (Chargers, 12th)
The Bolts vaulted up the board, trading up 16 spots to take the California kid who inherits L.T.'s throne.

Jason Pierre-Paul DE, South Florida (Giants, 15th)
A "Freak" athlete in the mold of Jevon Kearse, JPP burst onto the scene at USF last year after two junior college stops and is now the ultimate boom-or-bust prospect.

Mike Iupati G, Idaho (49ers, 17th)
Samoan giant (6'5", 331) struggled with language barrier out of high school but has grown into an elite guard with left tackle potential.

Tim Tebow QB, Florida (Broncos, 25th)
Arguably the most controversial player to enter the draft since 2000, the lefty passer has fullback goal line running skills and off-the-charts intangibles (and jersey sales).

First-Round Fallout

Despite being considered sure first-rounders for most of their careers, these five-star recruits and All-Americans waited longer than anticipated before finally being picked.

Sergio Kindle LB, Texas (Ravens, 43rd)
Knee injury concerns plagued the hybrid defensive end/backer edge rusher.

Jimmy Clausen QB, Notre Dame (Panthers, 48th)
Final loss of the Charlie Weis era at Notre Dame was the crash of Clausen's draft stock.

Taylor Mays S, USC (49ers, 49th)
Blamed Pete Carroll for misusing him schematically at USC and not drafting him with the hometown Seahawks.

Carlos Dunlap DE, Florida (Bengals, 54th)
Asleep at the wheel; has the physical tools but lacks the consistent work ethic of a top pick.

Joe McKnight RB, USC (Jets, 112th)
"Next Reggie Bush" went 110 picks later than his Trojans role model.

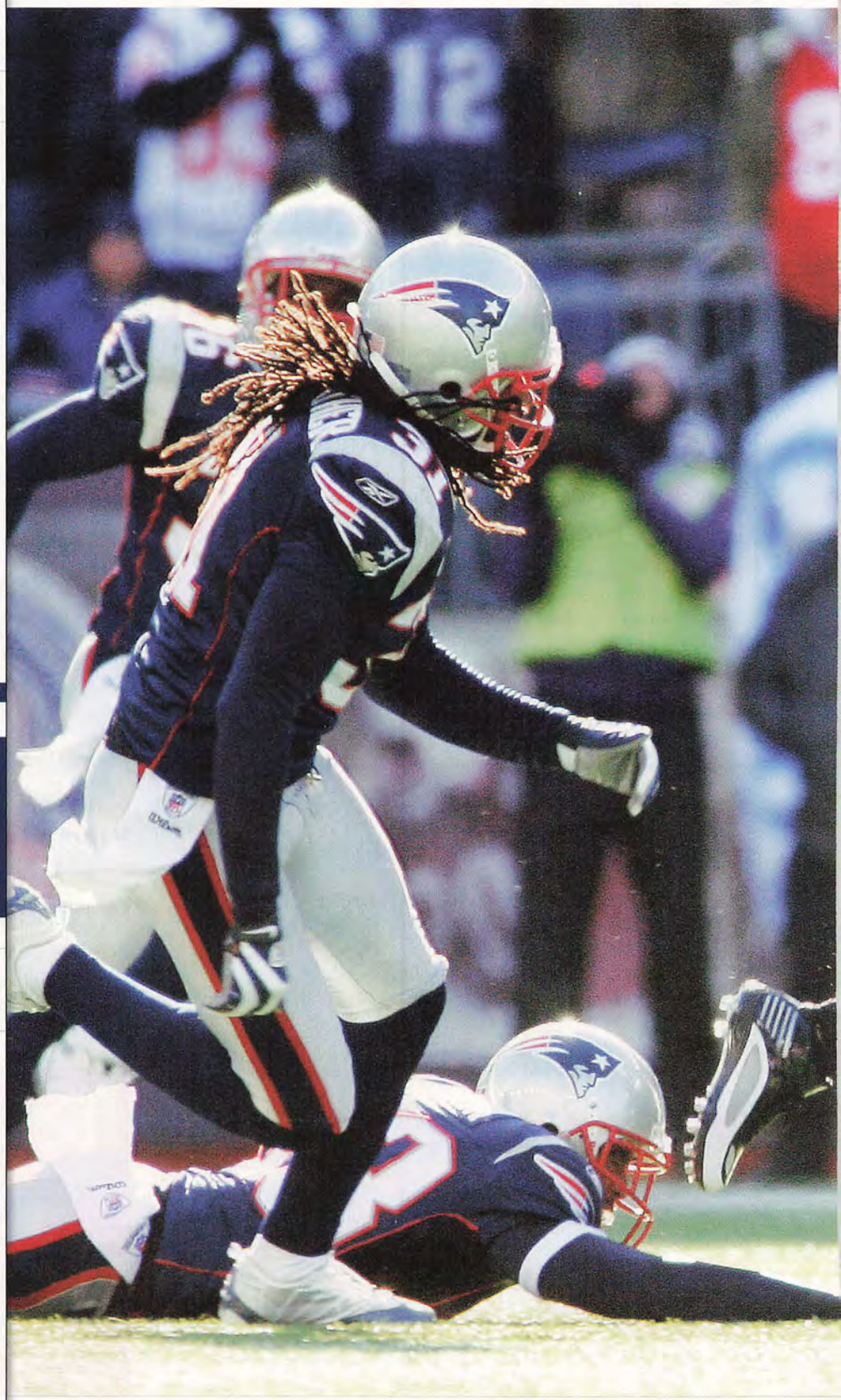
Undrafted Duo

This pair of big-name preseason All-Americans played and punched their way out of the top 255 picks.

Jevan Snead, QB, Ole Miss (undrafted, signed by Buccaneers)
After a strong redshirt sophomore season, Snead fell apart last year, throwing 20 touchdowns and 20 interceptions for the overrated Rebels. Then, inexplicably, Snead decided to forgo his senior season in Oxford.

LeGarrette Blount, RB, Oregon (undrafted, signed by Titans)
The punch heard round the world after an opening Thursday night loss to Boise State resulted in an indefinite suspension. After a 1,002-yard, 17-touchdown season in 2008, Blount lost his draft status after losing his cool.

2010 AFC



AFC PLAYOFFS

SEEDING

1. Chargers
2. Ravens
3. Colts
4. Jets
5. Texans
6. Dolphins

WILD CARD ROUND

Colts over Dolphins
Jets over Texans

DIVISIONAL ROUND

Jets over Chargers
Ravens over Colts

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP

Ravens over Jets

SUPER BOWL XLV

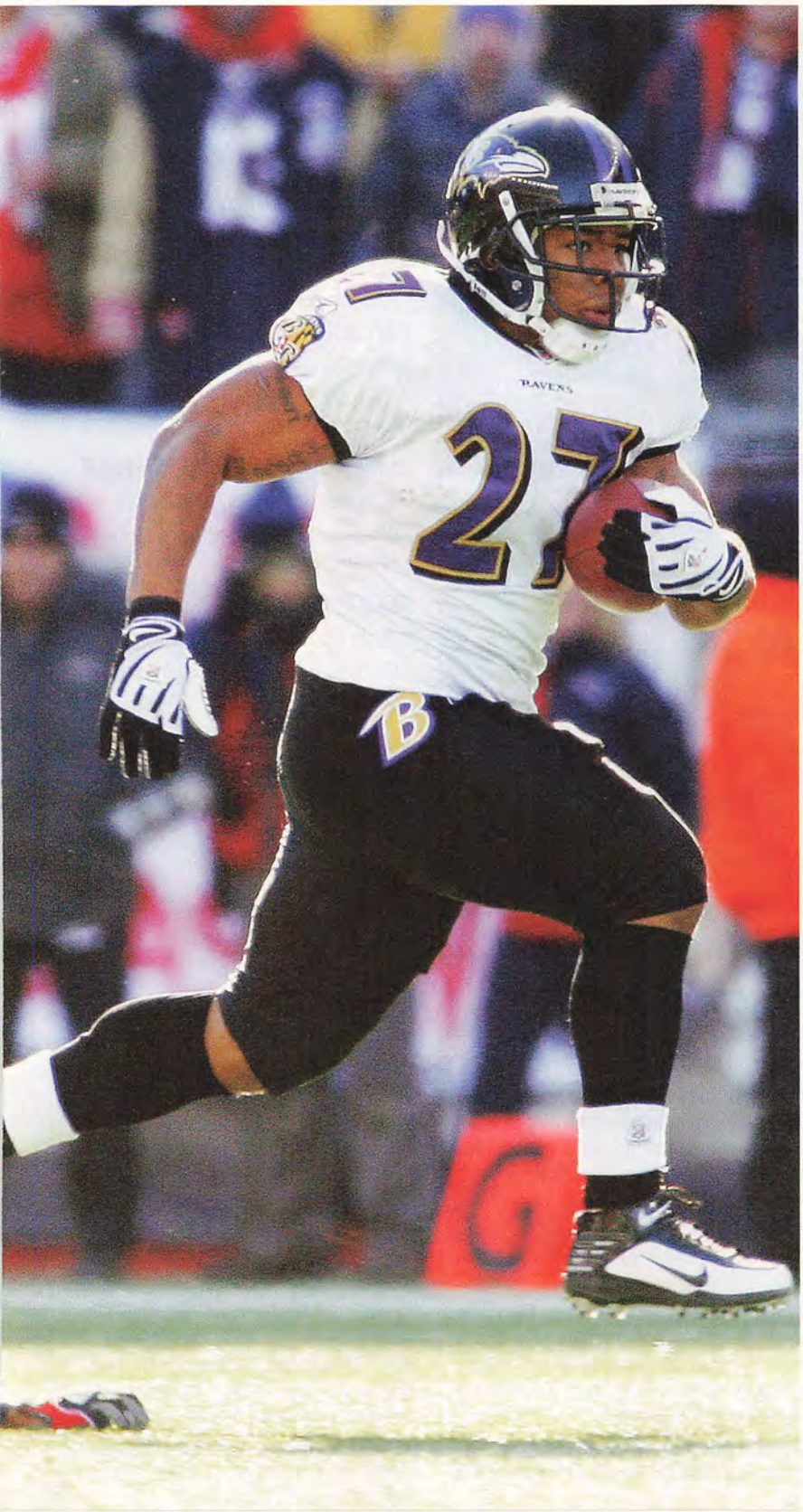
Ravens over Vikings
Sunday, Feb. 6, 2011
Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, Texas (FOX)

ATHLON SPORTS' AFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Ravens
2. Colts
3. Jets
4. Chargers
5. Texans
6. Dolphins
7. Steelers
8. Patriots
9. Titans
10. Bengals
11. Jaguars
12. Raiders
13. Broncos
14. Chiefs
15. Browns
16. Bills

NOTE: Athlon's Power Rankings and playoff seedings differ to some degree because a team's overall strength and its ultimate finish in the standings don't always correlate.

PREDICTIONS



Stew Milne/US Presswire

AFC EAST

1. NEW YORK JETS

Jets have the roster to back up Ryan's swagger.

2. MIAMI DOLPHINS

Henne, Pennington … what, Chad Hutchinson isn't available?

3. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Pats have been mortal with and without Brady last two years.

4. BUFFALO BILLS

Bills hire Gailey. Going … to … sleep … zzzzz.

AFC NORTH

1. BALTIMORE RAVENS

Ravens' Q rating soars with addition of Boldin.

2. PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Big Ben-sized pall hangs over the Steelers.

3. CINCINNATI BENGALS

Sorry, Bengals don't do repeats.

4. CLEVELAND BROWNS

If Delhomme is an upgrade, Quinn was worse than we thought.

AFC SOUTH

1. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Colts are the Braves of the NFL.

2. HOUSTON TEXANS

Texans' talent level is inching up toward Indy's.

3. TENNESSEE TITANS

Here we are again, wondering about Vince.

4. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Picking the Jags would be an Alualu-caliber reach.

AFC WEST

1. SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Winning the West is easy; winning AFC, not so much.

2. OAKLAND RAIDERS

Yeah, this pick feels strange to us, too.

3. DENVER BRONCOS

If McDaniels made movies, he'd swap *Avatar* for *Ishtar*.

4. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Haley upgraded staff; maybe players come next.

AFC NOTES

by Mike Nahrstedt

PRESEASON ALL-AFC TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	Peyton Manning, Colts
RB	Chris Johnson, Titans
RB	Ray Rice, Ravens
WR	Andre Johnson, Texans
WR	Brandon Marshall, Dolphins
TE	Antonio Gates, Chargers
T	Jake Long, Dolphins
T	Joe Thomas, Browns
G	Robert Gallery, Raiders
G	Logan Mankins, Patriots
C	Nick Mangold, Jets

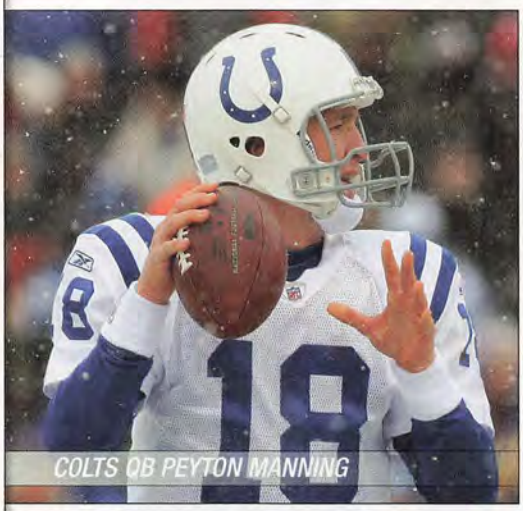
DEFENSE

E	Dwight Freeney, Colts
E	Mario Williams, Texans
T	Terrance Knighton, Jaguars
T	Haloti Ngata, Ravens
LB	Karlos Dansby, Dolphins
LB	Elvis Dumervil, Broncos
LB	LaMarr Woodley, Steelers
CB	Nnamdi Asomugha, Raiders
CB	Darrelle Revis, Jets
S	Troy Polamalu, Steelers
S	Ed Reed, Ravens

SPECIALISTS

K	Nate Kaeding, Chargers
P	Shane Lechler, Raiders

TITANS RB CHRIS JOHNSON


COLTS QB PEYTON MANNING

JETS CB DARRELLE REVIS

AFC AWARD WINNERS

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Peyton Manning, QB, Colts

Almost as sure of a thing as a Bob Sanders injury.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Darrelle Revis, CB, Jets

The rules have changed. This man *is* an island.

COMEBACK PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Troy Polamalu, SS, Steelers

When healthy, he impacts games like no other defender.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Ryan Mathews, RB, Chargers

Chargers traded up to get him and handed him the keys.

COACH OF THE YEAR

John Harbaugh, Ravens

Super Bowl-winning offense will put Brian Billick's to shame.

STATISTICAL MOVERS

The biggest movement in the NFL team rankings from the 2008 season to 2009:

TOTAL OFFENSE, BIGGEST RISE: Steelers, from 22nd (311.9 yards per game) to seventh (371.3). Ben Roethlisberger emerged as an elite passer and Rashard Mendenhall shoved Fast Willie Parker into the slow lane.

TOTAL OFFENSE, BIGGEST FALL: Broncos, from second (395.8) to 15th (341.4). Jay Cutler out, Kyle Orton in. 'Nuff said.

TOTAL DEFENSE, BIGGEST RISE: Broncos, from 29th (374.6) to seventh (315.0). And this was even with a late-season swoon that had nothing to do with coordinator Mike Nolan's decision to jump at a similar job with the Dolphins after the season.

TOTAL DEFENSE, BIGGEST FALL: Titans, from seventh (293.6) to 28th (365.6). Yes, Albert Haynesworth was missed.

ABOUT THE SCHEDULE

TOUGHEST SCHEDULE: Texans. If the Texans make the playoffs for the first time, they will have earned it.

EASIEST SCHEDULE: Chargers. With this slate, San Diego should be embarrassed if it wins fewer than 12 games.

MOST PRIME-TIME GAMES: Colts, Patriots, Jets, Steelers and Chargers (five each). And get this: Pittsburgh's first national TV appearance comes right after Ben Roethlisberger's suspension is (potentially) set to end. How con-*veeen*-ient.

MOST TRAVEL MILES: Broncos (23,184). Just means Tim Tebow can spread his message as far away as Europe.

FEWEST TRAVEL MILES: Bengals (5,992). The schedule is tough, but at least jet lag won't be an issue.

Manning: Luc Leclerc/US Presswire; Revis: Kirby Lee/US Presswire; Johnson: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports
Mangin: James Lang/US Presswire; Dansby: Gene Lower/Getty Images; Colts: Brian Spurlock/US Presswire

BROWNS COACH ERIC MANGINI

COACHING TIDBITS

ON THE HOT SEAT: Eric Mangini, Browns. New team president Mike Holmgren hasn't said as much, but Mangini has a year to show he's the right Man-genius for the job.

LEAST EXCITING HIRE: Chan Gailey, Bills. Buffalo was interested in Mike Shanahan and Bill Cowher and wound up with Gailey. He has decent credentials, but his hire (yawn!) alone won't push the needle on ticket sales.

KEY COORDINATOR HIRES: Charlie Weis (offense) and Romeo Crennel (defense), Chiefs. Todd Haley is hoping the head coaching washouts can rediscover the magic they displayed as Bill Belichick assistants in New England.

COACH WE ENJOY MOST: Rex Ryan, Jets. See, it's possible to succeed in this league without being a prisoner of paranoia.

COACH WE'RE SURPRISED TO STILL SEE: Tom Cable, Raiders. Somehow, he overcame a lousy season and accusations that he punched a former assistant and physically abused two ex-wives and an ex-girlfriend.

FREE AGENCY RECAP

BEST SIGNING: Karlos Dansby, LB, Dolphins. The Cardinals are still smarting after losing their big-play linebacker.

BEST RE-SIGNING: Gary Brackett, LB, Colts. Brackett is an underappreciated key to the Colts' underrated defense.

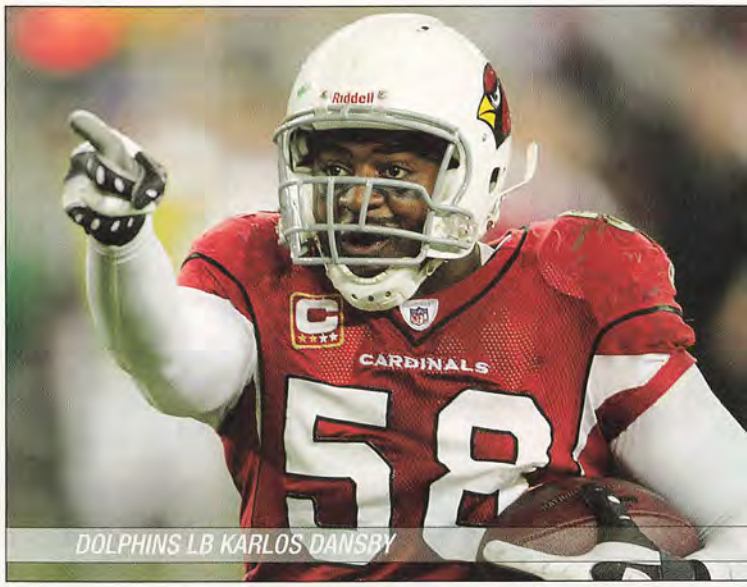
BIGGEST RISK/REWARD SIGNING: Aaron Kampman, DE, Jaguars. He's a great fit for a 4-3 defense that needs pass-rush help desperately, but his surgically repaired knee must be up to the task.

MOVING UP IN THE WORLD: Cory Redding, DE, Ravens (from Seahawks).

SLIPPING INTO THE LOW-RENT DISTRICT: Scott Fujita, LB, Browns (from Saints).

BEST FREE AGENT HAUL: Chiefs. Guard Ryan Lilja and center Casey Wiegmann beef up a woeful line, and running back Thomas Jones is as good as he's ever been.

BEST HAUL INCLUDING TRADES: Jets. Antonio Cromartie joins Darrelle Revis to form the league's best cornerback tandem, Santonio Holmes gives Mark Sanchez a superb target (for 12 games, anyway), Jason Taylor helps the pass rush and LaDainian Tomlinson is still useful in spurts.



DOLPHINS LB KARLOS DANSBY

WINNINGEST TEAMS OF THE DECADE

The Colts would gladly trade their one Super Bowl ring for the Patriots' three or the Steelers' two in the years 2000-09, but they did win more regular-season games than any other AFC team, falling short of double-digit victories in a season only once during the decade. Cleveland avoided the bottom spot in the AFC rankings largely because the Houston franchise didn't exist in 2000 or 2001.

Team	Wins
1. Colts	115
2. Patriots	112
3. Steelers	103
4. Broncos	93
5. Ravens	92
6. Titans	91
7. Chargers	85
8. Jets	80
9. Dolphins	79
10. Jaguars	76
11. Chiefs	70
12. Bengals	68
13. Bills	66
14. Raiders	62
15. Browns	57
16. Texans	49*

*2002-09

QUARTERBACKS WON-LOST RECORDS

The 16 frontrunners for the starting job on each team, ranked by winning percentage in games started.

1. Tom Brady, Patriots	97–30 (.764)
2. Philip Rivers, Chargers	46–18 (.719)
3. Ben Roethlisberger, Steelers*	60–26 (.698)
4. Peyton Manning, Colts	131–61 (.682)
5. Vince Young, Titans	26–13 (.667)
6. Joe Flacco, Ravens	20–12 (.625)
7. Kyle Orton, Broncos	29–19 (.604)
8. Jake Delhomme, Browns	54-38 (.587)
9. Chad Henne, Dolphins	7–6 (.538)
10. Mark Sanchez, Jets	8–7 (.533)
11. Carson Palmer, Bengals	42–39 (.519)
12. David Garrard, Jaguars	31–31 (.500)
13. Matt Schaub, Texans	19–21 (.475)
14. Matt Cassel, Chiefs	14–16 (.467)
Trent Edwards, Bills	14–16 (.467)
16. Jason Campbell, Raiders	20–32 (.385)

*Serving suspension at start of season

4 AFC EAST FORECAST

buffalo

BILLS

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER: Ralph Wilson
CEO: Russ Brandon
GENERAL MANAGER: Buddy Nix
STADIUM: Ralph Wilson Stadium (73,079)
SURFACE: AstroPlay
WEBSITE: www.buffalobills.com
TICKETS: 877-228-4257
TRAINING CAMP: St. John Fisher College (Pittsford, N.Y.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	5
2006	7
2007	7
2008	7
2009	6

BILLS LB PAUL POSLUSZNY

After missing the playoffs for a 10th consecutive season, the longest postseason drought in the franchise's 50 years, the Bills have embarked on their sixth general manager/coach combination since 2000. In Buddy Nix and Chan Gailey, Buffalo has hired two experienced and well-respected football men. The team's loyal but frustrated fan base, though, can only hope that owner Ralph Wilson has gotten it right this time.

So after unpacking their bags and analyzing the roster they inherited, what have Nix and Gailey determined about the state of the team? That things are better than the 6–10 record of 2009 would indicate.

"When I came here I heard, 'Oh, the cupboard's bare.' The next thing I heard was, 'The team's in disarray.' The next thing was, 'The sky is falling.' I'm here to tell you folks, it's not," Gailey told a gathering of fans. "We've got some good players, some good young players. We've got the nucleus to be a good football team."

If they can settle on a competent quarterback and protect him, adjust to a new 3-4 defensive scheme and find a cure for an injury bug that put 20 players out of commission, the Bills could indeed be a good football team. But in the rugged AFC East, good might not be enough to end Buffalo's long playoff drought.

COACHES This is Gailey's second NFL head coaching stint, having led Dallas to an 18–14 record and two playoff berths in 1998-99. Firing Gailey is among owner Jerry Jones' biggest regrets. Wilson is hoping that hiring Gailey won't be one of his. After being part of 11 playoff teams and coaching in four Super Bowls, Gailey brings a strong résumé to Buffalo as a creative offensive coach, something Buffalo, which ranked 28th in scoring last season, sorely needs. Gailey's trademark is to maximize the talents of the players he has on hand. In Pittsburgh, for example, Jerome Bettis enjoyed his best seasons rushing the ball, but Gailey also gave life to Kordell "Slash" Stewart by capitalizing on Stewart's multiple skills. Former Cardinals running backs coach Curtis Modkins will assist Gailey in gameplanning as offensive coordinator, but Gailey will be the chief playcaller. Gailey's work with quarterbacks as diverse in talent as John Elway and Jay Fiedler is a bonus. Defensive coordinator George Edwards was hired to help Buffalo convert from a 4-3 defense to the trendy 3-4. He coached linebackers in Miami the past five years and believes in attacking an offense, not sitting back and reacting. ***GRADE: C***

QUARTERBACKS For fans, the most disappointing words spoken on draft weekend by Nix were, "We're set." He was referring to the team's uninspiring quarterback situation. After losing out in the Donovan McNabb sweepstakes and not drafting Jimmy Clausen, Tim Tebow or Colt McCoy, Buffalo will stage a competition for the starting job between Trent Edwards, Ryan Fitzpatrick and Brian Brohm. That trio combined to complete 58 percent of its passes with 19 interceptions and 46 sacks. Given Gailey's history with developing quarterbacks, there is hope that Edwards, a third-round pick in 2007 with 30 career starts, can resurrect his career. Among the candidates, he has the most potential if he can overcome a history of injuries and stay in the lineup. Fitzpatrick has shown flashes here and there while making spot starts for three teams, including Buffalo, but if he's the best option at quarterback, times are tough. Brohm, a record-setting passer at Louisville who couldn't hang on to a backup job in Green Bay, lends some intrigue. ***GRADE: D***

RUNNING BACKS Fred Jackson, a free agent out of Division III Coe College and the United Indoor Football League, was the team's feel-good story of 2009 when he topped 1,000 yards rushing and led the NFL in all-purpose yardage with 2,516. With rookie first-round pick C.J. "Thriller" Spiller in the mix, Jackson isn't likely to get the same number of touches but will remain Buffalo's workhorse. Spiller, one of the most productive players in NCAA history, provides a change-of-pace weapon in the mold of Reggie Bush and should give Buffalo's 30th-ranked offense a boost in horsepower. Gailey has drawn up plays designed specifically for Spiller, lining him up in the backfield and as a slot receiver to create mismatches and keep defenders guessing. The odd man out is 2007 first-round pick Marshawn Lynch, who has had off-field issues and wants out of Buffalo. Lynch will need a productive and headline-free training camp to keep his roster spot. Corey McIntyre is a reliable battering ram at fullback. ***GRADE: A***

RECEIVERS With the team parting ways with Terrell Owens and Josh Reed, the pressure returns to Lee Evans to produce as the undisputed No. 1 target. His 340 receptions, 5,356 yards and 39 touchdowns in six seasons rank among the top four in each category in club history, a testament to his work ethic and talent given he has not enjoyed any stability at quarterback or in coordinators. Evans' last and only 80-catch season was in 2006, when J.P. Losman was under

Posluszny, Byrd: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Show Us the Baby New GM Buddy Nix says Bills fans have a right to be cynical about the team's latest rebuilding project. "People ask me why should we believe this is going to be any different," he says. "Talk is cheap. We all know that. It's like I've always said, 'Don't tell me about the labor pains; just show me the baby.' That's what we've got to do. We've got to show you the baby, and the baby is winning."

Nobody Did it Better A year ago, running back Fred Jackson became the first player in NFL history to have 1,000 yards rushing (1,062) and 1,000 yards on kick returns (1,014) in the same season.

Gold Jackets Galore When it came to having team personnel inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, the 2000s have been good to the Bills. Seven members of the organization were enshrined in Canton in the decade, compared with two in the franchise's first 40 years. They were owner Ralph Wilson, coach Marv Levy, quarterback Jim Kelly, wide receiver James Lofton, guard Joe DeLamielleure, running back Thurman Thomas and defensive end Bruce Smith.

2009 STATS

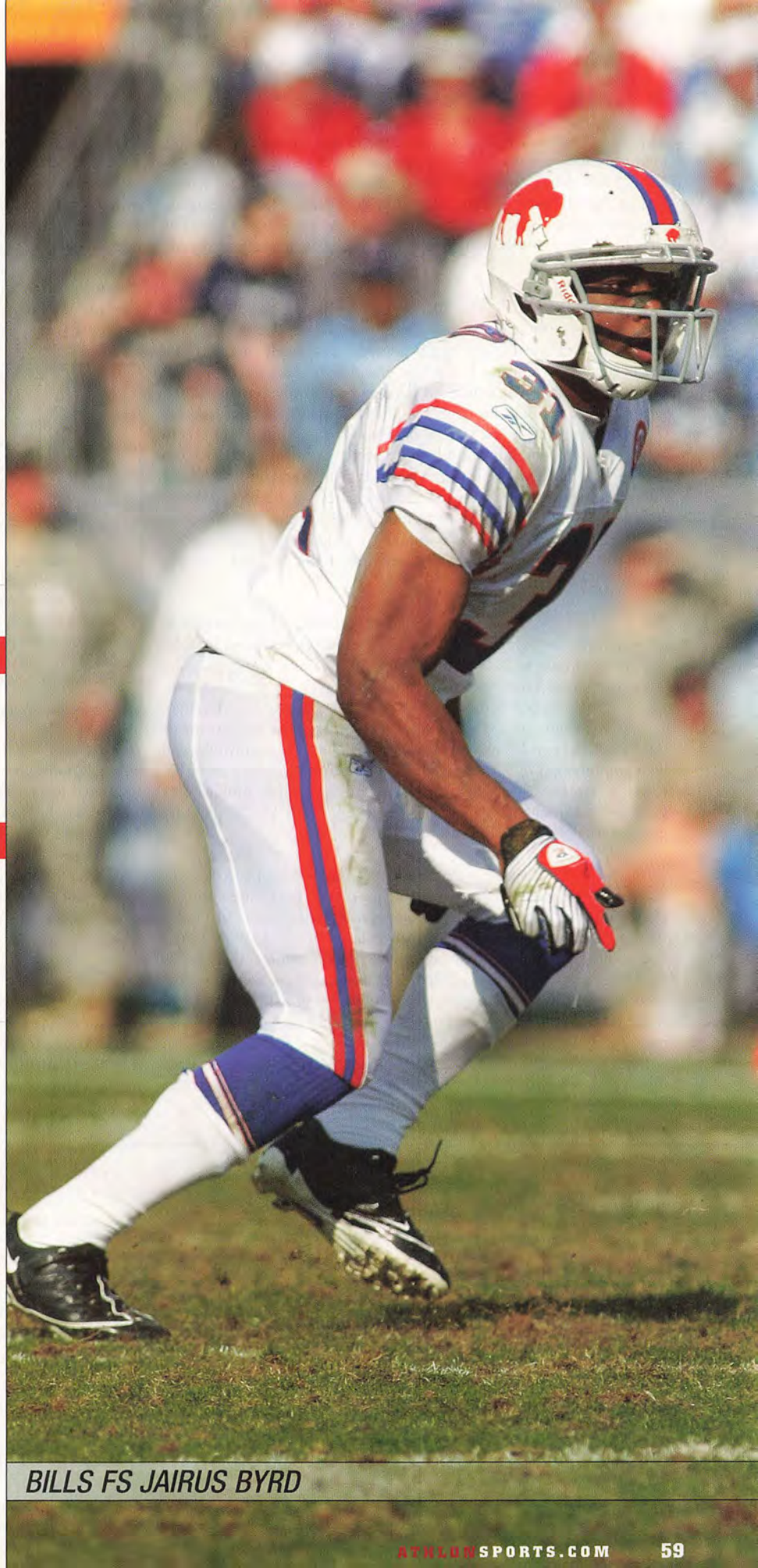
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	273.9	30	14
Rushing	116.7	16	10
Passing	157.2	30	14
Scoring	16.1	28	14
Punt Returns	6.6	26	13
Kick Returns	23.7	10	5
Red Zone TD %	31.6	32	16

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	340.6	19	10
Rushing	156.3	30	15
Passing	184.2	2	2
Scoring	20.4	16	9
Interceptions	28	2	1
Sacks	32	T18	T9
Turnover Differential	+3	T11	5

SCOUTING THE BILLS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP BUFFALO

"That was a better team with Ryan Fitzpatrick last year. What you're seeing from Trent Edwards is similar to what you saw in college. Some talent there, but I don't think he's more than a backup long-term. Teammates don't seem to follow him. … They're trying to change to a 3-4 front, so it's a brand new scheme, but they need players that fit there. There's a transition period. You can't just flip the switch. Some of the incumbents fit, others don't. … Where they can line up and play now is at safety and the corners. Those are strengths. Between Jairus Byrd and Donte Whitner, they're good at safety. Each is a good complement for the other — Whitner as a run player, and Byrd in coverage. At corner, Leodis McKelvin's a good cover guy and Terrence McGee's a player you can win with. Drayton Florence is a solid three. Those top three are guys you can play with. … They're good at running back, and the best player on their offense is Lee Evans. The second-best will probably be C.J. Spiller."



BILLS FS JAIRUS BYRD

center. The Bills are hoping that either James Hardy, Steve Johnson or rookie Marcus Easley, all big receivers, develops into a reliable No. 2. The 6'5" Hardy is a year past major knee surgery and could be ready to blossom into the star the Bills saw when they selected him 41st overall in 2008. Meanwhile, with new coaches on board, 5'9" speedster Roscoe Parrish could become a factor in the passing game once again. He caught only three passes a year ago after falling out of favor. The Bills hope Shawn Nelson steps up at tight end in his second season. ***GRADE: C***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Bills have ranked in the bottom eight of NFL offenses seven consecutive seasons, thanks to a relentless inability to build a solid line. No significant upgrades were made to a unit that was decimated by injuries, but on the plus side, four starters do return: center Geoff Hangartner, guards Eric Wood and Andy Levitre and left tackle Demetrius Bell. Free agent addition Cornell Green is expected to start at right tackle. He's not a glamorous pickup but does have 46 career starts and shouldn't be a liability on the right side. Left tackle is another story. Bell, a seventh-round pick in 2008, is coming off a knee injury and struggled with penalties when he was healthy. Athletic rookie Ed Wang is a candidate to replace Bell. Meanwhile, Wood, a first-round pick in '09 who was enjoying a stellar rookie campaign, is coming off a severely broken leg and might not be ready for the opener. ***GRADE: D***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN After a decade of recruiting players to play in a 4-3 scheme, the Bills have undergone a front-seven makeover in order to play a 3-4 look in 2010. Gone are the small, quick two-gap tackles in favor of space-eaters such as second-round pick Torell Troup, who will play in a rotation with Kyle Williams at the nose. John McCargo, a 2006 first-round pick who has just one career start, is at a crossroads but might find new life in a three-man front. The ends, meanwhile, will be a combination of former tackle Marcus Stroud, Spencer Johnson, Chris Ellis, free agent signee Dwan Edwards and rookie Alex Carrington. Edwards, 28, was a shrewd pickup. The 6'3", 290-pounder played very well for the Ravens. ***GRADE: C***

LINEBACKERS Rising star Paul Posluszny, who has topped 100 tackles each of the past two years, will anchor one of the inside positions alongside either Kawika Mitchell or newcomer Andra Davis, the former Cleveland star who played well for Denver last season and was a surprise free agent cut. The bigger concern involves who will excel at outside linebacker and give Buffalo a consistent pass rush off the edge as well as solid play in coverage. Former ends Aaron Schobel, Chris Kelsay and Aaron Maybin are being asked to make the switch to 3-4 outside linebacker. Schobel, second in team history with 78 sacks, contemplated retirement after last season. The 250-pound Maybin, last year's first-round pick, was grossly overmatched at end in the 4-3 but has a better chance to make an impact with his hand off the ground. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE BACKS With Jairus Byrd, a Pro Bowl rookie free safety last season, at the forefront, this is clearly Buffalo's defensive strength. Byrd, who tied for the NFL lead with nine interceptions in 14 games, led a Bills defense that intercepted 28 passes overall, second most in the league. The safety position is exceptionally strong; former first-round pick Donte Whitner will fight for snaps with George Wilson and Bryan Scott. At corner, 2008 first-round pick Leodis McKelvin is back after missing 13 games with a broken leg. He'll team with Terrence McGee, who is recovering from shoulder surgery. This area is extremely deep with Drayton Florence (64 career starts), Ashton Youboty and Reggie Corner. Buffalo ranked No. 2 in overall pass defense at 184.2 yards per game in 2009. ***GRADE: A-***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Andra Davis	LB	Denver	Ryan Denney	DE	Free agent
Dwan Edwards	DE	Baltimore	Chris Draft	LB	Washington
Marlon Favorite	DT	Seattle	Terrell Owens	WR	Free agent
Cornell Green	OT	Oakland	Josh Reed	WR	Free agent

Things won't be as fun without Owens, and the team's decision not to bring him or Reed back leaves a big void in the receiving corps behind No. 1 Lee Evans. Denney was a solid backup but wasn't a fit in the Bills' new 3-4 scheme. Edwards and Davis, on the other hand, bring much-needed size and 3-4 experience. Edwards was among the best defensive ends available. Davis has been a tackling machine for the Browns and Broncos. Green, meanwhile, fills a gaping hole at right tackle.

SPECIALISTS Kicker Rian Lindell and punter Brian Moorman annually rank among the NFL's best. Lindell owns the league's best field goal percentage inside 40 yards (98.6 percent) since 2006, and Moorman's 46.6-yard average last season broke his own team record. Jackson did a strong job returning kicks after McKelvin, who set a team record with nearly 1,500 yards in 2008, was injured. The Bills need to do a better job returning punts, however, after Parrish averaged just 5.5 yards per attempt. The wild card for both return jobs is Spiller, who tied an NCAA record with eight career return touchdowns. ***GRADE: A***

FINAL ANALYSIS The Bills will be more fun to watch under the offensive-minded Gailey than they were under Dick Jauron. But it's difficult to imagine them winning many games with so many question marks at quarterback, receiver and offensive line. And it doesn't help that the teams they're chasing in the AFC East were more aggressive upgrading their rosters in the offseason than the Bills, who obviously needed to do more.

BUFFALO IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. C.J. Spiller	RB	5-11	196	Clemson
2. Torell Troup	NT	6-3	314	UCF
3. Alex Carrington	DE	6-5	285	Arkansas State
4. Marcus Easley	WR	6-2	216	Connecticut
5. Ed Wang	OT	6-5	314	Virginia Tech
6. Arthur Moats	ILB	6-0	246	James Madison
6. Danny Batten	OLB	6-3	254	S. Dakota State
7. Levi Brown	QB	6-3	219	Troy
7. Kyle Calloway	G	6-6	323	Iowa

Points were hard to come by last season for Buffalo, which ranked 28th in the league in scoring at 16.1 points per game. Enter Spiller, a running back/return specialist from Clemson who will add excitement to a Bills product the team's own owner has called "dull." On the flip side, Troup and Carrington will help keep opponents from scoring; each brings much-needed size to the team's new 3-4 scheme and will earn playing time in the front-seven rotation. Easley, a late-bloomer, has a shot to contribute on a team hurting for receivers. Wang has a chance to win the starting left tackle job. Brown has good tools but is a developmental player.

Bruce Schwartzman

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Brohm, Brian	QB	6-3	223	1	Louisville	FA-09	D2-GB-08
5 Edwards, Trent	QB	6-4	231	3	Stanford	D3-07	D3-Buf-07
14 Fitzpatrick, Ryan	QB	6-2	225	4	Harvard	FA-09	D7-StL-05
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
22 Jackson, Fred	RB	6-1	215	3	Coe College	FA-06	FA-Buf-06
23 Lynch, Marshawn	RB	5-11	215	3	California	D1-07	D1-Buf-07
38 McIntyre, Corey	FB	6-0	258	5	West Virginia	FA-08	FA-Phi-02
39 Mendenhall, Walter	RB	6-0	227	1	Illinois State	FA-10	FA-Phi-09
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
83 Evans, Lee	WR	5-10	197	6	Wisconsin	D1a-04	D1a-Buf-04
86 Fine, Derek	TE	6-3	247	2	Kansas	D4b-08	D4b-Buf-08
84 Hardy, James	WR	6-5	220	2	Indiana	D2-08	D2-Buf-08
18 Hawthorne, C.J.	WR	5-11	168	1	Hawaii	FA-08	FA-Buf-08
15 Huggins, Felton	WR	6-2	186	1	SE Louisiana	FA-07	FA-Jac-06
16 Jackson, Chad	WR	6-1	215	3	Florida	FA-10	D2-NE-06
13 Johnson, Steve	WR	6-2	202	2	Kentucky	D7b-08	D7b-Buf-08
87 Klopfenstein, Joe	TE	6-5	262	4	Colorado	FA-09	D2-StL-06
82 Matthews, Michael	TE	6-4	270	3	Georgia Tech	FA-10	FA-Det-10
89 Nelson, Shawn	TE	6-5	240	1	Southern Miss	D4-09	D4-Buf-09
11 Parrish, Roscoe	WR	5-9	178	5	Miami	D2-05	D2-Buf-05
80 Schouman, Derek	TE	6-2	223	3	Boise State	D7a-07	D7a-Buf-07
88 Stupar, Jonathan	TE	6-3	254	1	Virginia State	FA-09	FA-NE-08
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
77 Bell, Demetrius	T	6-5	307	1	Northwestern State	D7a-08	D7a-Buf-08
60 Butler, Brad	OL	6-7	315	4	Virginia	D5b-06	D5b-Buf-06
73 Chambers, Kirk	T	6-7	315	5	Stanford	FA-09	D6-Cle-04
61 Gaddis, Christian	OL	6-1	300	1	Villanova	FA-09	FA-Buf-07
Green, Cornell	T	6-6	315	10	Central Florida	FA-Oak-10	FA-Was-00
63 Hangartner, Geoff	C	6-5	301	5	Texas A&M	FA-09	D5-Car-05
74 Hennessey, Nick	OL	6-5	291	1	Colgate	FA-09	FA-Buf-09
67 Levitre, Andy	G	6-2	305	1	Oregon State	D2b-09	D2b-Buf-09
69 Meredith, Jamon	OL	6-5	304	1	South Carolina	FA-09	D5-GB-09
76 Ramsey, Andre	OL	6-5	322	1	Ball State	FA-09	FA-Sea-09
66 Watkins, Jason	OL	6-6	325	1	Florida	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
70 Wood, Eric	G	6-4	315	1	Louisville	D1b-09	D1b-Buf-09
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
72 Duncan, Rashaad	DT	6-2	315	1	Pittsburgh	FA-09	FA-TB-09
Edwards, Dwan	DE	6-3	290	6	Oregon State	FA-Bal-10	D2-Bal-04
93 Ellis, Chris	DE	6-4	261	2	Virginia Tech	D3-08	D3-Buf-08
98 Harvey, Lonnie	DT	6-3	342	1	Morgan State	FA-09	FA-Car-09
91 Johnson, Spencer	DT	6-3	286	6	Auburn	FA-08	FA-Min-04
75 Mace, Corey	DE	6-3	287	2	Wyoming	FA-09	FA-Buf-07
97 McCargo, John	DT	6-2	307	4	NC State	D1b-06	D1b-Buf-06
99 Stroud, Marcus	DT	6-6	310	9	Georgia	T-Jac-08	FA-Jac-01
95 Williams, Kyle	DT	6-1	306	4	LSU	D5a-06	D5a-Buf-06
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57 Corto, Jon	LB	6-1	220	2	Sacred Heart	FA-08	FA-Buf-07
Davis, Andra	LB	6-1	251	8	Florida	FA-Den-10	D5-Cle-02
56 Ellison, Keith	LB	6-0	229	4	Oregon State	D6-06	D6-Buf-06
54 Harris, Nic	LB	6-2	232	1	Oklahoma	D5-09	D5-Buf-09
90 Kelsay, Chris	LB	6-4	261	7	Nebraska	D2-03	D2-Buf-03
58 Maybin, Aaron	LB	6-4	250	1	Penn State	D1a-09	D1a-Buf-09
55 Mitchell, Kawika	LB	6-1	253	7	South Florida	FA-08	D2-KC-03
51 Posluszny, Paul	LB	6-1	238	3	Penn State	D2-07	D2-Buf-07
94 Schobel, Aaron	LB	6-4	243	9	TCU	D2a-01	D2a-Buf-01
43 Scott, Bryan	LB	6-1	219	7	Penn State	FA-07	D2-Atl-03
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
31 Byrd, Jairus	S	5-10	200	1	Oregon	D2a-09	D2a-Buf-09
27 Corner, Reggie	CB	5-9	175	2	Akron	D4a-08	D4a-Buf-08
29 Florence, Drayton	CB	6-0	195	7	Tuskegee	FA-09	D2-SD-03
47 Harris, Cary	DB	5-11	187	1	USC	D6-09	D6-Buf-09
25 Lankster, Ellis	DB	5-9	190	1	West Virginia	D7-09	D7-Buf-09
24 McGee, Terrence	CB	5-9	198	7	Northwestern State	D4a-03	D4a-Buf-03
28 McKelvin, Leodis	CB	5-10	184	2	Troy	D1-08	D1-Buf-08
40 Sargeant, Lydell	DB	6-1	187	1	Penn State	FA-09	FA-Buf-09
20 Whitner, Donte	S	5-10	208	4	Ohio State	D1a-06	D1a-Buf-06
37 Wilson, George	S	6-0	212	4	Arkansas	FA-04	FA-Det-04
26 Youboty, Ashton	CB	5-11	189	4	Ohio State	D3-06	D3-Buf-06
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Lindell, Rian	K	6-3	233	10	Washington State	FA-03	FA-Sea-00
8 Moorman, Brian	P	6-0	172	9	Pittsburg State	FA-01	FA-Sea-99
65 Sanborn, Garrison	LS	6-0	240	1	Florida State	FA-09	FA-Buf-09

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	83	Lee Evans
	13	Steve Johnson
WR	84	James Hardy
	11	Roscoe Parrish
LT	77	Demetrius Bell
	71	Ed Wang (R)
LG	67	Andy Levitre
	69	Jamon Meredith
C	63	Geoff Hangartner
	61	Christian Gaddis
RG	70	Eric Wood
	74	Nick Hennessey
RT		Cornell Green
	73	Kirk Chambers
TE	89	Shawn Nelson
	80	Derek Schouman
QB	5	Trent Edwards
	14	Ryan Fitzpatrick
FB	38	Corey McIntyre
RB	22	Fred Jackson
	21	C.J. Spiller (R)

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LDE		Dwan Edwards
	91	Spencer Johnson
NT	95	Kyle Williams
		Torell Troup (R)
RDE	99	Marcus Stroud
	92	Alex Carrington (R)
OLB	58	Aaron Maybin
	54	Nic Harris
ILB		Andra Davis
	55	Kawika Mitchell
ILB	51	Paul Posluszny
	57	Jon Corton
OLB	94	Aaron Schobel
	90	Chris Kelsay
CB	24	Terrence McGee
	26	Ashton Youboty
CB	28	Leodis McKelvin
	29	Drayton Florence
SS	43	Bryan Scott
	37	George Wilson
FS	31	Jairus Byrd
	20	Donte Whitner

SPECIAL TEAMS

K	9	Rian Lindell	P	8	Brian Moorman
KR	28	Leodis McKelvin	PR	21	C.J. Spiller (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Chan Gailey
Off. Coordinator/Running Backs: Curtis Modkins
Defensive Coordinator: George Edwards
Special Teams: Bruce DeHaven
Assistant Special Teams: Stan Kwan
Quarterbacks: George Cortez
Wide Receivers: Stan Hixon
Tight Ends: Bob Bicknell
Offensive Line: Joe D'Alessandris
Assistant Offensive Line: Bobby Johnson
Defensive Line: Giff Smith
Inside Linebackers: DeMontie Cross
Outside Linebackers: Bob Sanders
Secondary: George Catavolos
Offensive Quality Control: Kevin Patullo
Defensive Quality Control: Adrian White
Strength and Conditioning: Eric Ciano
Strength and Conditioning: John Gamble

FANTASY FLASH

Fred Jackson finished 10th among running backs in receptions in 2009, hauling in 46 balls. He had four or more catches in six games. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(6–10)*

Sept. 14	at New England	L	24–25
Sept. 20	Tampa Bay	W	33–20
Sept. 27	New Orleans	L	7–27
Oct. 4	at Miami	L	10–38
Oct. 11	Cleveland	L	3– 6
Oct. 18	at N.Y. Jets (ot)	W	16–13
Oct. 25	at Carolina	W	20– 9
Nov. 1	Houston	L	10–31
Nov. 15	at Tennessee	L	17–41
Nov. 22	at Jacksonville	L	15–18
Nov. 29	Miami	W	31–14
Dec. 3	N.Y. Jets (Toronto)	L	13–19
Dec. 13	at Kansas City	W	16–10
Dec. 20	New England	L	10–17
Dec. 27	at Atlanta	L	3–31
Jan. 3	Indianapolis	W	30– 7

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Miami	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Green Bay	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at New England	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Week 6	BYE	
Oct. 24	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	Chicago (Toronto)	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	Detroit	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Miami	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	New England	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm

2 AFC EAST FORECAST

miami

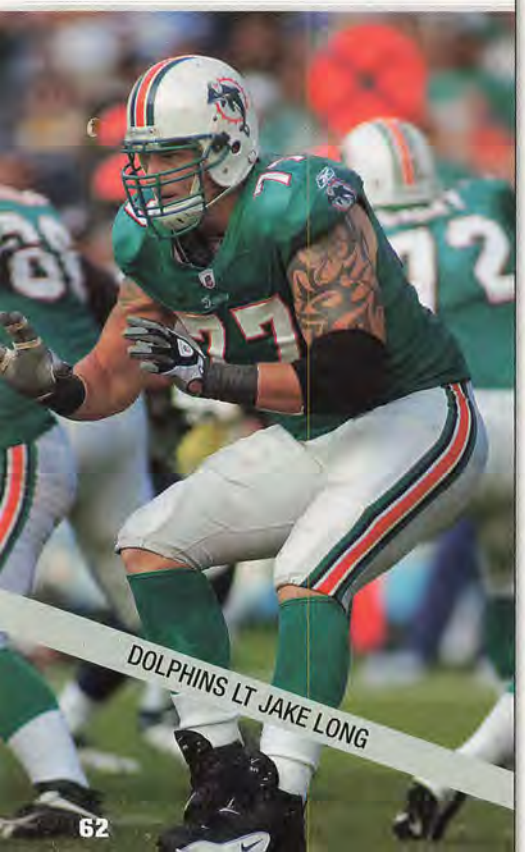
DOLPHINS

THE ORGANIZATION
CHAIRMAN: Stephen Ross
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT: Bill Parcells
GENERAL MANAGER: Jeff Ireland
STADIUM: SunLife Stadium (76,500)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.miamidolphins.com
TICKETS: 888-346-7849
TRAINING CAMP: Nova SE University (Davie, Fla.)

MIAMI

AFC EAST

Five-Year Win Trend


DOLPHINS LT JAKE LONG

So, what will the Trifecta accomplish in Year 3? The Trifecta, of course, is the trio of executive vice president Bill Parcells, general manager Jeff Ireland and coach Tony Sparano, which arrived from Dallas in 2008 and quickly gave credibility to what had recently been a dysfunctional franchise. But after a surprising playoff season in 2008, the Dolphins slipped in 2009 and now must deal with two powerhouses in their own division, the perennially competitive Patriots and the brash and talented Jets.

"We had this conversation not too long ago with myself and Bill and Jeff," Sparano says. "It was along the lines of the three of us saying, 'We don't really care what anybody else does.' We have to worry about what we do and do what we do well."

What do they do well? They run the ball. They stop the run. But if the Dolphins plan on passing either of their rivals, they'll need to get more production out of their passing game — and mostly, they'll need to stop opposing passers.

COACHES Sparano enjoyed a magical debut season, but the encore was more challenging and disappointing. He will be tested again this season, and not just strategically — he had some questionable game management decisions — but also philosophically. As the league trends toward prolific passing games, Sparano believes in power running. Offensive coordinator Dan Henning and quarterbacks coach David Lee did a nice job breaking in new starter Chad Henne last season. Now we'll see what they can do with a legitimate No. 1 receiver, the newly acquired Brandon Marshall. They can get advice on how to handle Marshall from new defensive coordinator Mike Nolan, who joins the Dolphins after one season in Denver. Nolan replaces the fired Paul Pasqualoni and should bring a more attacking style. Nolan traditionally uses the 3-4 scheme that Parcells and Sparano prefer, but don't be surprised to see more hybrid looks. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS When Chad Pennington tore up his shoulder again in Week 3 last year, Henne, a second-round pick in 2008, took over and went 7–6 the rest of the way, even while getting little support from his defense and playing with pedestrian complementary players. Henne has the size, arm and confidence to be a quality NFL quarterback but still must develop other necessary traits such as touch and pocket awareness. Not wanting to move his family, Pennington re-signed with the Dolphins and chose to accept the No. 3 position and more of a mentor role. His presence should be valuable to Henne, with whom he has a good relationship. Henne's backup will be Tyler Thigpen or Pat White. Thigpen has proven he can play in the NFL. White, a second-round pick in 2009, has not. He looked overmatched as a rookie, even in specially designed WildPat packages. ***GRADE: B-***

RUNNING BACKS Can Ronnie Brown stay healthy? That's the lingering question about the Dolphins' physical, versatile halfback, who missed the final seven games of 2009 with a Lisfranc fracture of his right foot, two years after missing the final nine games with a knee injury. Brown's presence remains critical. He is the only halfback on the roster who is fully comfortable as the triggerman in the Wildcat, and he takes the burden off his close friend Ricky Williams. Williams ripped off four 100-yard rushing performances in the first five games with Brown injured but slowed down the stretch. Williams' workload of 241 carries was more than he'd had the previous three years combined and his most since 2003. Williams could get even more rest if, as expected, 5'8" Patrick Cobbs returns from a serious knee injury. Quick and tough, Cobbs is a Sparano favorite because he can catch, run from scrimmage and return kicks. Fullback Lousaka Polite is automatic as a short-yardage rusher and has greatly improved his blocking. ***GRADE: B+***

RECEIVERS Six. That was the number of touchdowns scored by the Dolphins' four primary receivers last season. And that meager production is why the Dolphins strayed from their philosophy of avoiding so-called diva receivers and traded two draft picks for Marshall, who has averaged 7.7 touchdowns and 109 catches over the past three seasons. He's not a burner, but he is a premium possession receiver and will make Henne look much better, provided he stays with the program. He has had a history of troubling domestic incidents and was insubordinate at times during his Denver tenure. Now newly married and well paid, Marshall promised upon arrival "to be more of a professional, on and off the field, at all times." Marshall's arrival should allow the other wideouts to slide into more comfortable roles. Brian Hartline showed promise as a rookie, running good routes and occasionally springing loose for a big play. Greg Camarillo is another year removed from knee surgery and coming off a perfect season (no drops). And Davone Bess is crafty in the slot. What's missing? A speed threat and a dynamic tight end. The Dolphins cut their losses with Ted Ginn Jr. after one too many drops and sprints toward the sideline. At tight end, they'll hope Anthony Fasano bounces back from a disappointing year to help Marshall and Bess work the middle. ***GRADE: B-***

Long, Henne: peter Brouillet

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Going Showbiz Miami had more starpower in the skyboxes than on the field last season. Celebrities including Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Fergie, the Williams sisters and Gloria Estefan bought small shares in Stephen Ross' team. Venus Williams' advice to the majority owner: "Don't draft us."

Un-Ute-sual Pattern This was the third straight year the Dolphins picked a Big Ten player in the first round, with Penn State's Jared Odrick following Illinois' Vontae Davis and Michigan's Jake Long. More surprising? This is the third time in four years the Dolphins took a Utah player in the first four rounds. Koa Misi joins Sean Smith and Paul Soliai.

Ricky Still Running Who would have guessed when he quit on the team in 2004 that, six years later, Ricky Williams would have the longest (non-continuous) tenure of any Dolphin? Miami acquired him via trade in 2002. Yeremiah Bell, drafted in 2003, has the longest continuous tenure.

Butt of Joke After the Dolphins took him in the third round, John Jerry, an offensive lineman from Ole Miss, denied having shoulder problems. "I had hemorrhoids. That's the only thing," Jerry says.

2009 STATS

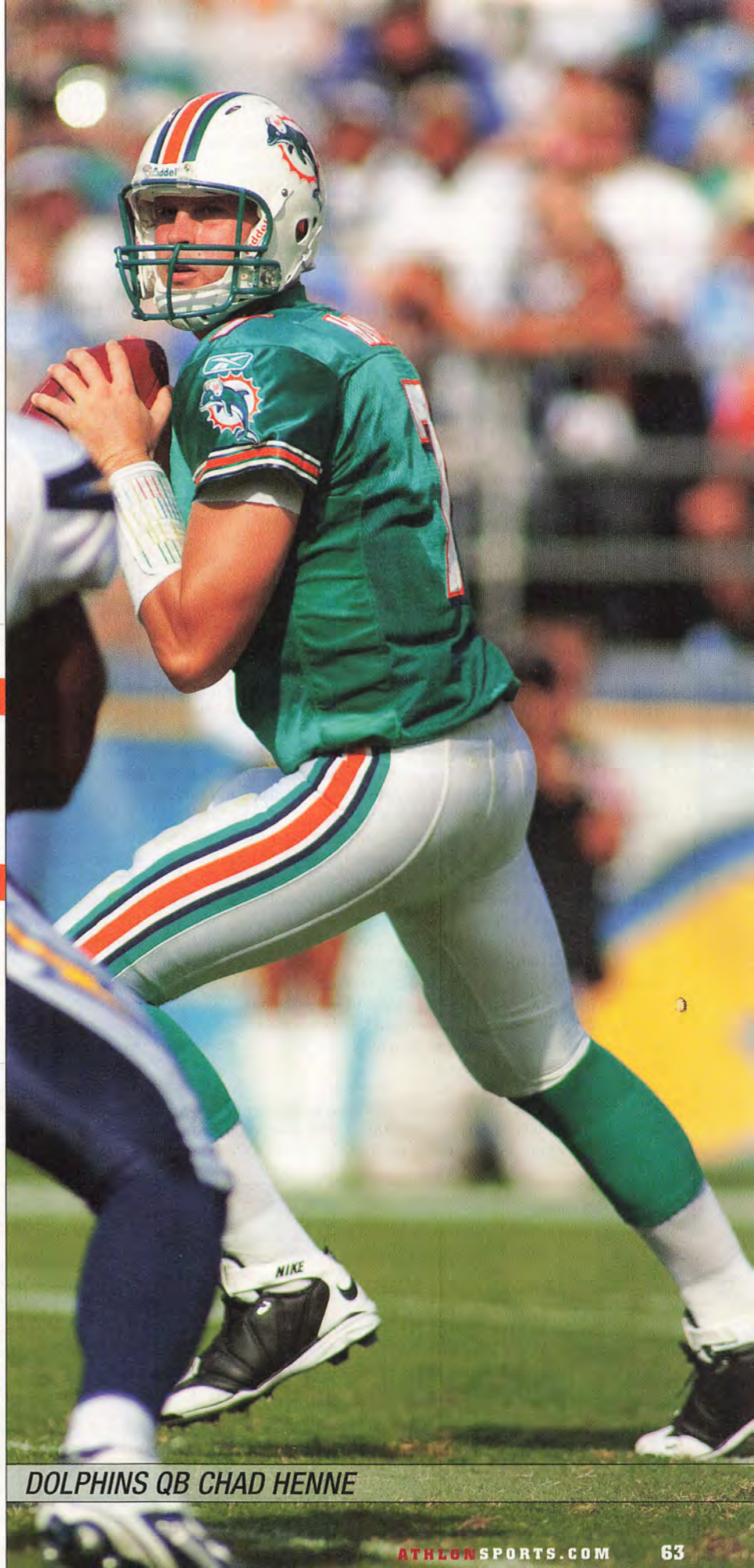
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	337.6	17	9
Rushing	139.4	4	3
Passing	198.1	20	9
Scoring	22.5	15	7
Punt Returns	7.2	21	10
Kick Returns	23.2	T11	6
Red Zone TD %	61.1	4	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	349.3	22	11
Rushing	114.7	18	8
Passing	234.6	24	13
Scoring	24.4	T25	14
Interceptions	15	T16	T9
Sacks	44	T3	2
Turnover Differential	-8	T26	14

SCOUTING THE DOLPHINS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP MIAMI

"I think they'll still be a run-first, play-action passing team — even with Brandon Marshall. Marshall will give them a shot in the arm, and he'll make Davone Bess and Brian Hartline better. He's a formidable threat on the outside. But I don't think their identity will change too much. They'll do what they do and run the ball. Remember, they still have a young quarterback and they don't want to rush him. … They've got a lot of young talent up front defensively — Phillip Merling, Koa Misi, Jared Odrick, Cameron Wake. I think they'll be fine there. The big question is the secondary. They're pretty much pinning their hopes on Vontae Davis and Sean Smith. If those guys improve in Year 2, it'll be a very good defense. … The one thing you know is they are going to be ready to play every game. They made themselves better this offseason. Now we'll see how good the quarterback is."



DOLPHINS QB CHAD HENNE

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Jake Long has arrived. The first overall pick in 2008, Long struggled against Atlanta's John Abraham in the season opener, and then infrequently thereafter. Long is a run-blocking force and has demonstrated that he can adjust enough to handle speed rushers. He's the least of the Dolphins' worries for the next decade. Two other positions are set. Jake Grove performed reasonably well at center, and he returns along with right tackle Vernon Carey, whose play was undermined by knee and back problems. It does appear there will be a changing of the guards. Justin Smiley got hurt and didn't finish either of his Dolphins seasons, so Nate Garner will get a shot at left guard. Garner has shown remarkable versatility, playing tackle, guard and center in a single game. Another potential left guard starter is Donald Thomas, who lost the right guard spot to Garner late last season. The right guard should be Richie Incognito, deemed one of the league's dirtiest players. "I like his physical play," Sparano says. "I like his toughness." He doesn't like penalties, though, and Incognito is prone to those. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN As the defense crumbled around him, the unheralded Randy Starks put together the most consistent season of any Dolphin in 2009, mostly while playing end. Now Starks will be asked to move inside and man the nosetackle position on many downs, at least until veteran Jason Ferguson returns from suspension (for performance-enhancing drugs) after eight weeks, or until massive Paul Soliai can control his weight enough to be counted upon. With Starks shifting inside, three young players will have a chance to make a name on the outside. Phillip Merling and Kendall Langford were high draft choices in 2008, and while both have shown promise, neither has made enough impact plays. Merling, in particular, needs to improve his practice habits or risk getting pushed out by rookie first-rounder Jared Odrick. **GRADE: B-**

LINEBACKERS Sometimes, it's tough to notice inside linebacker Channing Crowder when he's on the field because he makes few game-turning plays. But it's easy to notice when he's missing because the Dolphins have fared worse, particularly in coverage, without him. So Crowder returns, and he'll have more help inside. The Dolphins replaced Akin Ayodele with former Cardinals standout Karlos Dansby, spending lavishly to do so. Dansby has shown a knack for the big play. "He's a big linebacker that's rangy and that can really run," Sparano says. Cameron Wake can really run, too and in limited action he showed the pass-rushing prowess that made him a two-time Canadian Football League Defensive Player of the Year. The question is whether he can stop the run. If so, he'll get plenty of snaps outside. The other spot is wide open. Charlie Anderson and Quentin Moses haven't done much to distinguish themselves, so rookie Koa Misi will get a long look. **GRADE: C+**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Dolphins didn't intend to start two rookie cornerbacks in 2009. Then veteran Will Allen's knee injury forced Vontae Davis into the lineup with Sean Smith. Smith was a little steadier, and Davis a little more spectacular, which was somewhat of a surprise considering the ball skills that Smith showed in the preseason. Both got burned some, which was to be expected. Davis is smaller but loves to hit — and talk. Smith, at 6'3", uses his feet well but needs to get more physical. If either regresses, the Dolphins can turn back to Allen. The oft-injured Yeremiah Bell saw his perseverance result in his first Pro Bowl appearance, even if he didn't have his best overall season. He brings some playmaking ability to the strong safety spot. Gibril Wilson flopped at free safety, leaving the athletic Chris Clemons, the intelligent Tyrone Culver and rookie Reshad Jones to compete for the spot. **GRADE: C+**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Karlos Dansby	LB	Arizona	Akin Ayodele	LB	Denver
Tim Dobbins	LB	San Diego	Ted Ginn Jr.	WR	San Francisco
Richie Incognito	G	Buffalo	Nate Jones	S	Denver
Brandon Marshall	WR	Denver	Joey Porter	LB	Arizona
			Jason Taylor	LB	N.Y. Jets
			Gibril Wilson	S	Free agent

Miami landed impact players through free agency (Dansby) and trade (Marshall). They'll provide big plays, something the Dolphins have rarely gotten from their linebackers and receivers. Incognito fits the tough-guy profile but has character concerns. Wilson was a free agent flop. Porter had become a distraction, failing to stop the run, repeatedly refusing to come off the field and then spending his offseason ripping the regime. Taylor is another story. The Dolphin icon felt, after he had seven sacks despite playing out of position and with a sore shoulder, that his only option was to join the hated Jets.

SPECIALISTS No problems in the kicking game. Dan Carpenter missed only three field goal attempts last season, and punter Brandon Fields was much more efficient than earlier in his career, forcing opponents to start 25 times inside their 20-yard line. Kick coverage overall improved greatly over 2008, but the return game still needs work. With Ginn gone, the Dolphins don't have a potential gamebreaker at either spot. Bess, who handles punt returns, can make defenders miss but lacks a breakaway gear. This may be a place where the Dolphins can find a use for White. **GRADE: B**

FINAL ANALYSIS Parcells, Ireland and Sparano have cleaned house in less than three years, keeping only 12 players they inherited (so far), and only five or six of whom have a chance to start. So this is their team now. They have their quarterback, and they have their style of player (big, physical) at virtually every position. But it won't be a championship team until Henne takes a step toward the elite, which could be a year or two away, if it happens at all.

MIAMI IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Jared Odrick	DE	6-5	304	Penn State
2. Koa Misi	LB	6-3	251	Utah
3. John Jerry	OL	6-5	328	Ole Miss
4. A.J. Edds	LB	6-3	246	Iowa
5. Nolan Carroll	CB	5-11	202	Maryland
5. Reshad Jones	S	6-1	214	Georgia
7. Chris McCoy	LB	6-2	245	Middle Tennessee
7. Austin Spitler	LB	6-3	234	Ohio State

The Dolphins coached the South team at the Senior Bowl, and their first four picks all played in that game, three of them on the team that beat Tony Sparano's side. The members of this class have some common elements: big guys from big schools, and several were senior captains. Odrick will get a chance to start immediately at end. Misi (who has pass rush skills) and Jones (who can play either safety spot) have golden opportunities too, because the Dolphins have holes at their positions. Jerry joins an open competition at either guard spot. Edds could see time in coverage packages early, especially considering the defense's trouble handling tight ends. McCoy, Spitler and Carroll will need to play special teams to stick.

Bruce Schwartzman

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Henne, Chad	QB	6-3	230	2	Michigan	D2b-08	D2b-Mia-08
10 Pennington, Chad	QB	6-3	230	10	Marshall	FA-08	D1-NYJ-00
16 Thigpen, Tyler	QB	6-1	224	3	Coastal Carolina	T-KC-09	D7-Min-07
6 White, Pat	QB	6-0	190	1	West Virginia	D2a-09	D2a-Mia-09

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23 Brown, Ronnie	RB	6-0	230	5	Auburn	D1-05	D1-Mia-05
38 Cobbs, Patrick	RB	5-8	205	4	North Texas	FA-06	FA-NE-06
26 Hilliard, Lex	RB	5-11	240	1	Montana	D6c-08	D6c-Mia-08
36 Polite, Lousaka	FB	6-0	245	5	Pittsburgh	FA-08	FA-Dal-04
22 Sheets, Kory	RB	5-11	206	1	Purdue	FA-09	FA-SF-09
34 Williams, Ricky	RB	5-10	230	9	Texas	T-NO-02	D1-NO-99

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Bess, Davone	WR	5-10	190	2	Hawaii	FA-08	FA-Mia-08
83 Camarillo, Greg	WR	6-1	190	4	Stanford	W-SD-07	FA-SD-05
80 Fasano, Anthony	TE	6-4	255	4	Notre Dame	T-Dal-08	D2-Dal-06
82 Hartline, Brian	WR	6-2	186	1	Ohio State	D4-09	D4-Mia-09
81 Haynos, Joey	TE	6-8	270	2	Maryland	FA-08	FA-GB-08
0 Marshall, Brandon	WR	6-4	230	4	Central Florida	T-Den-10	D4a-Den-06
84 Turner, Patrick	WR	6-5	220	1	USC	D3-09	D3-Mia-09

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
67 Berger, Joe	G	6-5	315	5	Michigan Tech	FA-Dal-09	D6-Car-05
72 Carey, Vernon	T	6-5	340	6	Miami	D1-04	D1-Mia-04
63 Gardner, Andrew	T	6-6	305	1	Georgia Tech	D6-09	D6-Mia-09
75 Garner, Nate	G/T	6-7	325	2	Arkansas	W-NYJ-08	D7-NYJ-08
64 Grove, Jake	C	6-4	300	6	Virginia Tech	FA-Oak-09	D2-Oak-04
68 Incognito, Richie	G	6-3	324	4	Nebraska	FA-Buf-10	D3-StL-05
77 Long, Jake	T	6-7	317	2	Michigan	D1-08	D1-Mia-08
76 Murtha, Lydon	T	6-7	315	1	Nebraska	FA-09	D7-Det-09
65 Smiley, Justin	G	6-3	310	6	Alabama	FA-SF-08	D2-SF-04
66 Thomas, Donald	G	6-4	310	2	Connecticut	D6b-08	D6b-Mia-08

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Dotson, Lionel	DE	6-4	290	2	Arizona	D7-08	D7-Mia-08
95 Ferguson, Jason	DT	6-3	310	13	Georgia	T-Dal-08	D7-NYJ-97
70 Langford, Kendall	DE	6-6	295	2	Hampton	D3-08	D3-Mia-08
78 McDaniel, Tony	DT	6-7	305	4	Tennessee	T-Jac-09	FA-Jac-06
97 Merling, Phillip	DE	6-4	295	2	Clemson	D2a-08	D2a-Mia-08
96 Soliai, Paul	DT	6-4	355	3	Utah	D4-07	D4-Mia-07
94 Starks, Randy	DT	6-3	305	6	Maryland	FA-Ten-08	D3-Ten-04

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Anderson, Charlie	LB	6-4	250	6	Ole Miss	FA-Hou-08	D6-Hou-04
52 Crowder, Channing	LB	6-2	250	5	Florida	D3-05	D3-Mia-05
58 Dansby, Karlos	LB	6-4	250	6	Auburn	FA-Ari-10	D2-Ari-04
51 Dobbins, Tim	LB	6-1	246	4	Iowa State	T-SD-10	D5-SD-06
59 Folsom, J.D.	LB	6-3	230	1	Weber State	D7a-09	D7a-Mia-09
93 Moses, Quentin	LB	6-5	260	3	Georgia	FA-07	D3-Oak-07
98 Roth, Matt	LB	6-4	275	5	Iowa	D2-05	D2-Mia-05
53 Torbor, Reggie	LB	6-2	250	6	Auburn	FA-NYG-08	D4-NYG-04
91 Wake, Cameron	LB	6-3	250	1	Penn State	FA-09	FA-Mia-09
50 Walden, Erik	LB	6-2	250	2	Middle Tennessee	W-KC-08	D6-Dal-08

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Allen, Jason	CB	6-1	200	4	Tennessee	D1-06	D1-Mia-06
25 Allen, Will	CB	5-10	195	9	Syracuse	FA-NYG-06	D1-NYG-01
37 Bell, Yeremiah	S	6-0	205	6	Eastern Kentucky	D6c-03	D6c-Mia-03
30 Clemons, Chris	FS	6-1	210	1	Clemson	D5b-09	D5b-Mia-09
29 Culver, Tyrone	S	6-1	210	4	Fresno State	FA-08	D6-GB-06
21 Davis, Vontae	CB	5-11	203	1	Illinois	D1-09	D1-Mia-09
24 Smith, Sean	CB	6-3	214	1	Utah	D2b-09	D2b-Mia-09

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Carpenter, Dan	K	6-2	225	2	Montana	FA-08	FA-Mia-08
92 Denney, John	LS	6-5	255	5	BYU	FA-05	FA-Mia-05
2 Fields, Brandon	P	6-5	245	3	Michigan State	D7b-07	D7b-Mia-07

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	0	Brandon Marshall
	15	Davone Bess
WR	82	Brian Hartline
	83	Greg Camarillo
LT	77	Jake Long
	75	Nate Garner
LG	75	Nate Garner
	74	John Jerry (R)
C	64	Jake Grove
	67	Joe Berger
RG	68	Richie Incognito
	66	Donald Thomas
RT	72	Vernon Carey
	63	Andrew Gardner
TE	80	Anthony Fasano
	81	Joey Haynos
QB	7	Chad Henne
	16	Tyler Thigpen
FB	36	Lousaka Polite
	38	Patrick Cobbs
RB	23	Ronnie Brown
	34	Ricky Williams

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	70	Kendall Langford
	78	Tony McDaniel
NT	94	Randy Starks
	96	Paul Soliai
DE	97	Phillip Merling
	98	Jared Odrick (R)
OLB	56	Charlie Anderson
	93	Quentin Moses
ILB	52	Channing Crowder
	53	Reggie Torbor
ILB	58	Karlos Dansby
	51	Tim Dobbins
OLB	91	Cameron Wake
	55	Koa Misi (R)
CB	24	Sean Smith
	25	Will Allen
CB	21	Vontae Davis
	32	Jason Allen
SS	37	Yeremiah Bell
	35	Reshad Jones (R)
FS	30	Chris Clemons
	29	Tyrone Culver

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Dan Carpenter	P	2	Brandon Fields
KR	38	Patrick Cobbs	PR	15	Davone Bess

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Tony Sparano
Offensive Coordinator: Dan Henning
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Nolan
Special Teams: John Bonamego
Asst. Special Teams: Darren Rizzi
Quarterbacks: David Lee
Running Backs: James Saxon
Wide Receivers: Karl Dorrell
Tight Ends: George DeLeone
Offensive Line: Dave DeGuglielmo
Offensive Quality Control: Steve Bush
Defensive Line: Kacy Rodgers
Inside Linebackers: Bill Sheridan
Asst. Head Coach/Secondary: Todd Bowles
Defensive Quality Control: David Corrao
Strength and Conditioning: Evan Marcus
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Dave Puloka

FANTASY FLASH

Ricky Williams rushed for 1,000 yards for the fifth time in his career last year, but for the first time since 2003. He did so with the smallest number of carries (241) and the longest run of his career (68 yards). *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(7–9)*

Sept. 13	at Atlanta	L	7–19
Sept. 21	Indianapolis	L	23–27
Sept. 27	at San Diego	L	13–23
Oct. 4	Buffalo	W	38–10
Oct. 12	N.Y. Jets	W	31–27
Oct. 25	New Orleans	L	34–46
Nov. 1	at N.Y. Jets	W	30–25
Nov. 8	at New England	L	17–27
Nov. 15	Tampa Bay	W	25–23
Nov. 19	at Carolina	W	24–17
Nov. 29	at Buffalo	L	14–31
Dec. 6	New England	W	22–21
Dec. 13	at Jacksonville	W	14–10
Dec. 20	at Tennessee (ot)	L	24–27
Dec. 27	Houston	L	20–27
Jan. 3	Pittsburgh	L	24–30

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	N.Y. Jets	8:20 pm
Oct. 4	New England (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Week 5	BYE	
Oct. 17	at Green Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	Tennessee	1:00 pm
Nov. 18	Chicago (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Nov. 28	at Oakland	4:05 pm
Dec. 5	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at N.Y. Jets	4:15 pm
Dec. 19	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Detroit	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at New England	1:00 pm

3 AFC EAST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

CHAIRMAN/CEO: Robert Kraft
DIRECTOR OF PLAYER PERSONNEL: Nick Caserio
STADIUM: Gillette Stadium (68,756)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.patriots.com
TICKETS: 800-543-1776
TRAINING CAMP: Gillette Stadium (Foxborough, Mass.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	10	PLAYOFFS
2006	12	PLAYOFFS
2007	16	
2008	11	
2009	10	PLAYOFFS

Conference Champion PLAYOFFS Playoffs

PATRIOTS LB JEROD MAYO

new-england PATRIOTS

These are strange times in Foxborough, times not seen since 1999 B.B. (before Belichick). The Patriots are coming off a 10–6 season, decent enough by most standards, but then were summarily dismissed by the visiting Ravens in the wild card round. Things do not appear to be trending upward. Dean Pees, the Patriots' respected defensive coordinator, became the scapegoat, let go after six seasons with the team. Bill Belichick has said he will take a larger role on defense — a gameplan that would make better sense if he had an offensive coordinator in place whom he trusted implicitly. Quarterbacks coach Bill O'Brien called most of the plays last season, but the Pats' playcalling was stale, and there are rumors that quarterback Tom Brady is not a huge fan of O'Brien's. The fact that he didn't receive a formal promotion can't be considered a positive, either.

That means Belichick will head into the season without a named offensive or defensive coordinator, something that hasn't happened in decades.

Add in the team's significant personnel holes, some of which were filled in the draft with players whose performance can't truly be projected yet, and New England could be headed for its worst season since Belichick's first team went 5–11 in 2000.

COACHING Belichick made his bones as a defensive savant. He was the coordinator on the Giants' 1986 and '90 Super Bowl-winning teams, and his gameplan to stop the Rams' "Greatest Show on Turf" in Super Bowl XXXVI is enshrined in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. His increased focus there will likely be a positive for the Patriots. But in the last few years, as his lieutenants began taking jobs around the league, the notoriously tight-lipped Belichick began to close ranks further. Now, nearly all of his assistants owe their NFL livelihood to him, and there are few men on staff who will offer a dissenting opinion. O'Brien is a hard worker, but his playcalling was vanilla last year. Linebackers coach Matt Patricia, widely considered Belichick's top assistant, is brilliant — he has a degree in aeronautical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute — but he relies too much on statistics and isn't a strong teacher. ***GRADE: B+***

QUARTERBACKS Tom Brady is Tom Brady — still one of the league's elite quarterbacks, and likely even more confident this year with a full season on his reconstructed knee behind him. Questions linger as to whether his commitment to the team has been affected by being married to a globe-trotting supermodel, but he professes that it is as strong as ever. Brian Hoyer, an undrafted rookie out of Michigan State, was the only backup last year, showing that the team has confidence in him. New England might bring in a veteran, likely to serve as the third-stringer and not necessarily to take Hoyer's job as the No. 2 guy. ***GRADE: A-***

RUNNING BACKS New England has an experienced group of runners, but their experience (read: age) makes it difficult to express a great deal of confidence in their ability to produce at a high level. Fred Taylor, Kevin Faulk and Sammy Morris will all be 33 or older when the season starts, and both Taylor and Morris missed time last year to injury. Laurence Maroney will once again be itching to prove that he isn't the first-round disappointment he's largely been to this point, though it would certainly be a positive if his newfound fondness for the end zone were to continue (a career-high nine touchdowns in '09). In a perfect world, Maroney would be the first- and second-down back, Morris would get the short yards, Taylor would be the goal line back and Faulk, as always, would be lined up all over the field. New England did not draft a running back to add fresh legs to a decidedly middle-of-the-pack ground game. ***GRADE: C+***

RECEIVERS It is unlikely that Wes Welker, who tore his left ACL and MCL in the regular-season finale, will return to the field before November, and there is no way of knowing how he will respond when he does play. It is best to plan to play without the league's leading receiver from a year ago, meaning New England will be counting on an aging Randy Moss and a young Julian Edelman to carry this unit. Assuming Moss as the No. 1 and Edelman, seen as something of a Welker clone, as the No. 2, someone needs to step up as a viable No. 3, something New England didn't have last year. The leading candidates are veteran Torry Holt, second-year pro Brandon Tate and rookie Taylor Price, who is seen as a vertical threat. The tight end has seemingly disappeared from the offense in recent seasons, but with the drafting of Rob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez, that could change. Brady has shown that he can make do with an average group of receivers, and right now that's what this group looks to be — two once-great players who are on their last legs and a host of others still learning the nuances of the offense. ***GRADE: B-***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN This is another group that has some aging parts but allowed a franchise-low (for 16 games) 18 sacks last year. Left tackle Matt Light will likely start the season in

Mayo: David Butler/US Presswire; Brady: Steve Moore

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

The Emperor Rookie punter Zoltan Mesko was a cult hero at Michigan, where fans wore T-shirts declaring "Zoltan for Space Emperor." The Romanian-born player was the first punter to serve as team captain in Wolverines history. He speaks four languages and is an unabashed fan of fellow Michigan alum Tom Brady.

Air Bodden Leigh Bodden is a bit obsessed with Michael Jordan. Bodden, who wears Jordan's number 23 and counts the Hall of Famer and his own mother as his heroes, owns every pair of Air Jordan sneakers ever produced and displays them in his house. He will sometimes buy two pairs of the same style so he can wear one and display the other.

What's Next? Shawn Springs has insisted that he isn't retiring yet, but he has some interesting ideas for what to do after his playing days — owning a jet-ski shop in Jamaica or a dessert bar in the Dominican Republic, or perhaps going to law school.

Renaissance Man Linebacker Tully Banta-Cain has produced a collection of T-shirts (his line is called Black Klown Clothier) and is an aspiring rapper and singer who hopes to release some tracks this year.

2009 STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	397.3	3	1
Rushing	120.1	12	9
Passing	277.2	3	3
Scoring	26.7	6	2
Punt Returns	11.4	5	3
Kick Returns	22.7	15	8
Red Zone TD %	52.3	13	7

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	320.2	11	6
Rushing	110.5	13	7
Passing	209.7	12	8
Scoring	17.8	5	3
Interceptions	18	T11	5
Sacks	31	T23	13
Turnover Differential	+6	T9	4

SCOUTING THE PATRIOTS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP NEW ENGLAND

"Their strength is in the secondary. The other strength is down the middle with Vince Wilfork and Jerod Mayo and rookie Brandon Spikes now. Their down-the-middle, interior rush defense, and play in coverage, through guys they've drafted and signed, those are the strengths. … They didn't get the replacement for Richard Seymour; they still have a journeyman there in Mike Wright. They signed Damione Lewis, but it might not be a natural fit, being at end, since he's been in a 4-3 his whole career. That's one area they didn't get better. … Tom Brady just didn't look as comfortable in the pocket last season. The knee injury had something to do with it, but some quarterbacks never get that feeling back. And without Wes Welker this year, the Patriots need a running game to help him. … Even though you hear the notion they have a need at running back, Laurence Maroney's a good player and Fred Taylor can be that veteran complementary guy. Give them another year there."

PATRIOTS QB TOM BRADY

his customary spot, but Sebastian Vollmer, who opened a lot of eyes as a rookie last year and should start at right tackle early, could eventually stake a claim for Light's position. In the prime of his career at age 28, Logan Mankins is one of the best guards in the league. The problems are at center and right guard. Dan Koppen, always undersized, has been getting pushed off the ball more and more, and Stephen Neal very nearly called it a career. Interior lineman Dan Connolly is versatile and therefore highly thought of in New England. He heads a young group of reserves with Mark LeVoir, Ryan Wendell, Rich Ohrnberger and late-round draft picks Ted Larsen and Thomas Welch. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Patriots' defensive dominance has always started in the trenches, so the fact that the defense struggled in '09 can be traced back to a major hole on the line. Once Richard Seymour was traded, New England didn't have a player near his stature to put in his place. Ty Warren and Vince Wilfork are both standouts, but they will get a great deal of attention if a third piece isn't found quickly. Mike Wright has been solid when called upon, but he is no Seymour. Originally looked at as a nosetackle, Ron Brace could be bumped outside. And given the personnel they have, the Patriots could play more 4-3 this year. But as the unit stands, the Pats will likely lack the ability to consistently push blockers back and close the pocket on the quarterback. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS Second-round draft pick Brandon Spikes is the wild card in assessing this group. If he can step in alongside Jerod Mayo at inside linebacker, New England might have the flexibility to move Gary Guyton to the outside, where the team is very thin. Guyton is fast and good in coverage but is a liability against the run, so moving him outside would make sense. Tully Banta-Cain, credited with 10 sacks last year, is the top returning pass-rusher statistically, though draftee Jermaine Cunningham could help and Pierre Woods, who saw his playing time decline last year, can mix things up as well. Overall, though, this unit isn't nearly as good as it was just a couple of years ago. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE BACKS If the front seven is doing its job, pressuring quarterbacks and causing problems for opponents, then the Patriots' backs are more than competent. If the front seven isn't doing its job, the secondary will struggle. Cornerback Leigh Bodden had his best seasons under Romeo Crennel in Cleveland; Crennel's system is very similar to Belichick's, and Bodden should show even more confidence this season after a five-interception performance in 2009. Second-year corner Darius Butler will likely start opposite Bodden, with Jonathan Wilhite and first-round pick Devin McCourty in the mix at nickel. Terrence Wheatley is considered by some in the organization to have more talent than Wilhite, but he was in a strange sort of exile last year and played just five games. Shawn Springs, who practiced quite a bit at safety last year, could see more time at that position. Strong safety Brandon Meriweather has been making strides, and ever-steady free safety James Sanders keeps the unit on the same page. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Alge Crumpler	TE	Tennessee	Chris Baker	TE	Seattle
Torry Holt	WR	Jacksonville	Jarvis Green	DE	Denver
Damione Lewis	DT	Carolina	Chris Hanson	P	Free agent
Marques Murrell	LB	N.Y. Jets	Junior Seau	LB	Retired
Gerard Warren	DL	Oakland	Adalius Thomas	LB	Free agent
			Benjamin Watson	TE	Cleveland

With the rules of the uncapped season impacting the quality of this year's free agent pool, the Patriots elected to re-sign their own free agents, agreeing to contracts with Vince Wilfork, Leigh Bodden, Kevin Faulk and Stephen Neal. The surprise cut of Baker and Watson's departure left the Pats with zero tight ends on the roster for a time, but Crumpler's signing gives them a veteran blocker to pair with two rookies. Lewis and Warren are both experienced on the defensive line, though only Warren has played two-gap before. Green will be missed for the depth he provided. If Holt has anything left in the tank, we'll find out in an offense that boasts Tom Brady and Randy Moss.

SPECIALISTS He has a personality as big as his booming punts, so it will be interesting to see how rookie Zoltan Mesko deals with the transition to the NFL. The punting game has been lacking for the Pats for a couple of years, but Mesko and his knack for directional punting can only improve things. Stephen Gostkowski is one of the best in the league for his combination of field goal accuracy and long kickoffs. Tate is expected to be the primary kick returner after a record-breaking college career. ***GRADE: B***

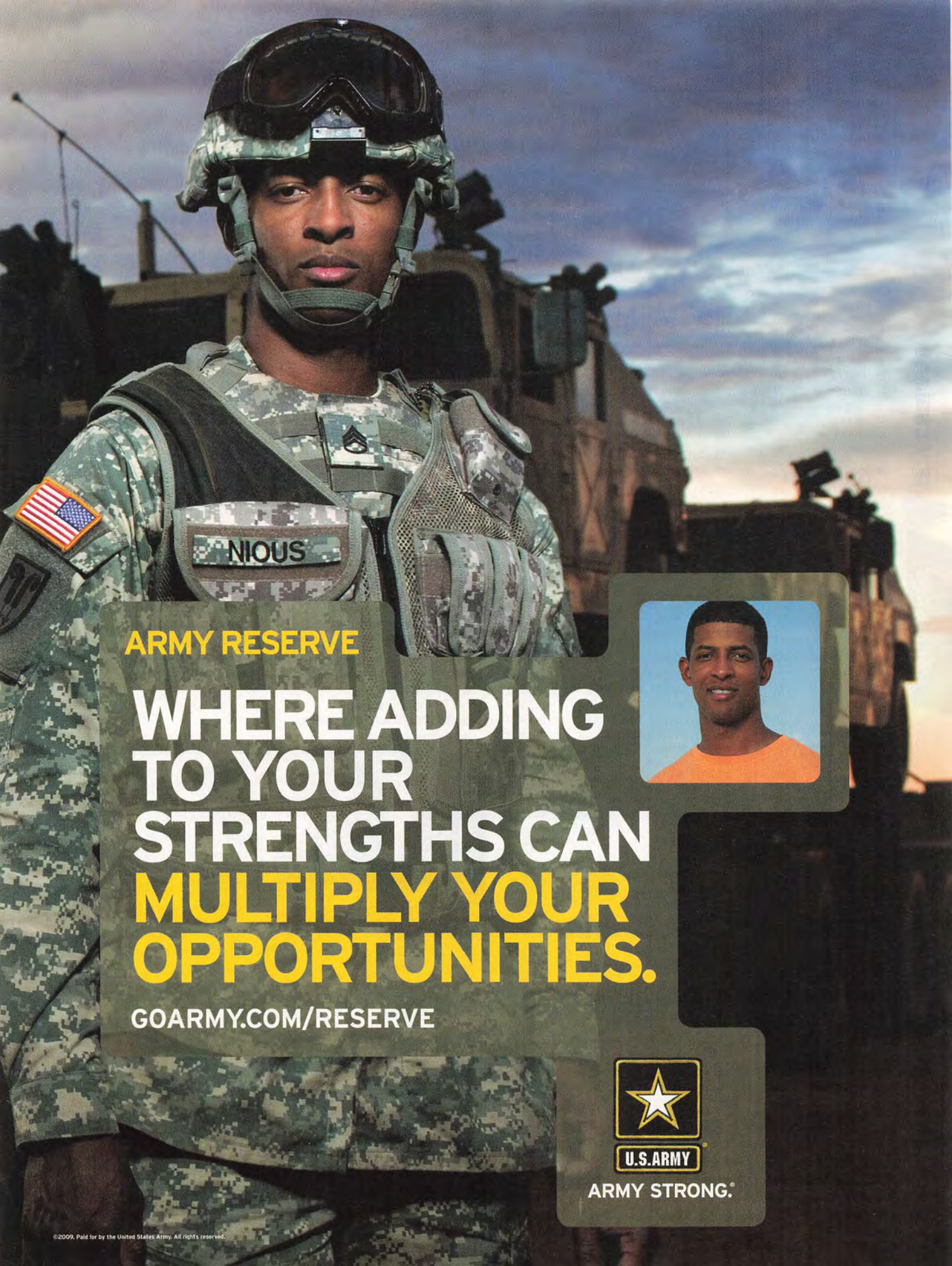
FINAL ANALYSIS Belichick's tenure with the Patriots has been marked by his almost always having the right answer. But this season, there just seem to be too many question marks, from who will be doing what on the coaching staff to who will catch the ball to who will rush the passer. The rival Jets and Dolphins made major moves via free agency, trades and the draft to improve, but the Patriots just didn't improve at the same rate. When it's all said and done, they could find themselves in third place in the AFC East.

Bruce Schwartzman

NEW ENGLAND IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Devin McCourty	CB	5-11	193	Rutgers
2. Rob Gronkowski	TE	6-6	264	Arizona
2. Jermaine Cunningham	OLB	6-3	266	Florida
2. Brandon Spikes	LB	6-3	249	Florida
3. Taylor Price	WR	6-0	204	Ohio
4. Aaron Hernandez	TE	6-2	245	Florida
5. Zoltan Mesko	P	6-4	240	Michigan
6. Ted Larsen	OL	6-2	304	NC State
7. Thomas Welch	OL	6-6	307	Vanderbilt
7. Brandon Deaderick	DE	6-4	314	Alabama
7. Kade Weston	DT	6-5	317	Georgia
7. Zac Robinson	QB	6-2	214	Oklahoma State

The selection of McCourty in the first round was met with surprise, particularly because so much emphasis was placed on his special teams prowess, not his ability as a cornerback. But he should challenge for the nickel slot. Spikes could turn out to be the gem of the class. He isn't quick, but he's instinctive, a trait he shares with Tedy Bruschi. Cunningham will likely move to outside linebacker. Price was underrated because he came from a bad offensive team at Ohio, and his only private workout was with New England, but he could be a vertical threat opposite Randy Moss. Gronkowski and Hernandez each bring a different skill set. Gronkowski seems to be more in the Antonio Gates mold, while Hernandez could play H-back. Punters aren't usually drafted as high as the fifth round, but Mesko is talented and fills a need.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2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Brady, Tom	QB	6-4	225	10	Michigan	D6b-00	D6b-NE-00
8 Hoyer, Brian	QB	6-2	215	1	Michigan State	FA-09	FA-NE-09
9 Rowe, Jeff	QB	6-5	221	3	Nevada	FA-09	D5-Cin-07
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
33 Faulk, Kevin	RB	5-8	202	11	LSU	D2-99	D2-NE-99
42 Green-Ellis, BenJarvus	RB	5-11	215	2	Ole Miss	FA-08	FA-NE-08
39 Maroney, Laurence	RB	5-11	220	4	Minnesota	D1-06	D1-NE-06
34 Morris, Sammy	RB	6-0	220	10	Texas Tech	FA-Mia-07	D5-Buf-00
21 Taylor, Fred	RB	6-1	228	12	Florida	FA-Jac-09	D1-Jac-98
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
85 Agnone, Robbie	TE	6-6	260	1	Delaware	FA-09	FA-Was-09
88 Aiken, Sam	WR	6-2	215	7	North Carolina	FA-Buf-08	D4-Buf-03
82 Crumpler, Alge	TE	6-2	262	9	North Carolina	FA-Ten-10	D2-Atl-01
11 Edelman, Julian	WR	6-0	198	1	Kent State	D7a-09	D7a-NE-09
84 Holt, Torry	WR	6-0	200	11	NC State	FA-Jac-10	D1-StL-99
10 Jenkins, Darnell	WR	5-10	191	1	Miami	FA-09	FA-Hou-08
81 Moss, Randy	WR	6-4	210	12	Marshall	T-Oak-07	D1-Min-98
80 Myers, Rob	TE	6-4	240	1	Utah State	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
18 Slater, Matthew	WR	6-0	200	2	UCLA	D5-08	D5-NE-08
15 Stanback, Isaiah	WR	6-2	208	3	Washington	FA-09	D4-Dal-07
19 Tate, Brandon	WR	6-1	195	1	North Carolina	D3a-09	D3a-NE-09
83 Welker, Wes	WR	5-9	185	6	Texas Tech	T-Mia-07	FA-SD-04
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
66 Bussey, George	OL	6-3	305	1	Louisville	D5-09	D5-NE-09
63 Connolly, Dan	C	6-4	313	4	SE Missouri State	FA-Jac-08	FA-Jac-05
77 Kaczur, Nick	T	6-4	315	5	Toledo	D3b-05	D3b-NE-05
67 Koppen, Dan	C	6-2	296	7	Boston College	D5-03	D5-NE-03
64 LeVoir, Mark	T	6-7	310	3	Notre Dame	W-StL-08	FA-Chi-06
72 Light, Matt	T	6-4	305	9	Purdue	D2-01	D2-NE-01
70 Mankins, Logan	G	6-4	310	5	Fresno State	D1-05	D1-NE-05
61 Neal, Stephen	G	6-4	305	8	Cal St.-Bakersfield	FA-01	FA-NE-01
60 Ohrnberger, Rich	OL	6-2	300	1	Penn State	D4-09	D4-NE-09
76 Vollmer, Sebastian	T	6-8	315	1	Houston	D2d-09	D2d-NE-09
69 Wendell, Ryan	C	6-2	285	1	Fresno State	FA-08	FA-NE-08
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
92 Brace, Ron	DT	6-3	330	1	Boston College	D2b-09	D2b-NE-09
65 Grady, Adrian	DT	6-1	290	1	Louisville	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
Lewis, Damione	DT	6-2	301	9	Miami	FA-Car-10	D1-StL-01
91 Pryor, Myron	DT	6-1	310	1	Kentucky	D6b-09	D6b-NE-09
90 Richard, Darryl	DT	6-4	295	1	Georgia Tech	D7b-09	D7b-NE-09
Warren, Gerard	DT	6-4	325	9	Florida	FA-Oak-10	D1-Cle-01
94 Warren, Ty	DE	6-5	300	7	Texas A&M	D1-03	D1-NE-03
75 Wilfork, Vince	NT	6-2	325	6	Miami	D1a-04	D1a-NE-04
99 Wright, Mike	DE	6-4	295	5	Cincinnati	FA-05	FA-NE-05
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
52 Alexander, Eric	LB	6-2	240	5	LSU	FA-04	FA-NE-04
95 Banta-Cain, Tully	LB	6-2	250	7	California	FA-SF-09	D7-NE-03
98 Crable, Shawn	LB	6-5	243	2	Michigan	D3-08	D3-NE-08
49 Davis, Bruce	LB	6-3	252	2	UCLA	D3-08	D3-NE-08
59 Guyton, Gary	LB	6-3	245	2	Georgia Tech	FA-08	FA-NE-08
51 Mayo, Jerod	LB	6-1	245	2	Tennessee	D1-08	D1-NE-08
44 McKenzie, Tyrone	LB	6-2	240	1	South Florida	D3b-09	D3b-NE-09
93 Murrell, Marques	LB	6-2	250	3	Appalachian State	FA-NYJ-10	FA-Phi-07
50 Ninkovich, Rob	LB	6-2	255	4	Purdue	FA-09	D5-NO-06
48 Williams, Thomas	LB	6-1	237	2	USC	FA-09	D5-Jac-08
58 Woods, Pierre	LB	6-5	255	4	Michigan	FA-06	FA-NE-06
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
27 Arrington, Kyle	CB	5-10	196	1	Hofstra	FA-08	FA-Phi-08
23 Bodden, Leigh	CB	6-1	193	7	Duquesne	FA-Det-09	FA-Cle-03
28 Butler, Darius	CB	5-10	185	1	Connecticut	D2c-09	D2c-NE-09
25 Chung, Pat	S	5-11	212	1	Oregon	D2a-09	D2a-NE-09
38 Lockett, Bret	DB	6-1	211	1	UCLA	W-Cle-09	FA-Cle-09
30 McGowan, Brandon	S	5-11	210	5	Maine	FA-Chi-09	FA-Chi-05
31 Meriweather, Brandon	S	5-11	200	3	Miami	D1-07	D1-NE-07
36 Sanders, James	S	5-10	210	5	Fresno State	D4-05	D4-NE-05
29 Springs, Shawn	CB	6-0	204	13	Ohio State	FA-Was-09	D1-Sea-97
22 Wheatley, Terrence	CB	5-9	185	2	Colorado	D2-08	D2-NE-08
24 Wilhite, Jonathan	CB	5-11	185	2	Auburn	D4-08	D4-NE-08
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
3 Gostkowski, Stephen	K	6-1	215	4	Memphis	D4b-06	D4b-NE-06
47 Ingram, Jake	LS	6-3	235	1	Hawaii	D6a-09	D6a-NE-09

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	81	Randy Moss
	19	Brandon Tate
WR	11	Julian Edelman
		Taylor Price (R)
WR	84	Torry Holt
	88	Sam Aiken
LT	72	Matt Light
	76	Sebastian Vollmer
LG	70	Logan Mankins
	63	Dan Connolly
C	67	Dan Koppen
	63	Dan Connolly
RG	61	Stephen Neal
	63	Dan Connolly
RT	76	Sebastian Vollmer
	77	Nick Kaczur
TE	87	Rob Gronkowski (R)
	82	Alge Crumpler
QB	12	Tom Brady
	8	Brian Hoyer
RB	39	Laurence Maroney
	34	Sammy Morris

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LE	94	Ty Warren
	92	Ron Brace
NT	75	Vince Wilfork
	91	Myron Pryor
RE	99	Mike Wright
	92	Ron Brace
OLB	95	Tully Banta-Cain
	58	Pierre Woods
ILB	51	Jerod Mayo
	52	Eric Alexander
ILB	44	Tyrone McKenzie
	55	Brandon Spikes (R)
OLB	59	Gary Guyton
		Jermaine Cunningham (R)
CB	28	Darius Butler
	29	Shawn Springs
CB	23	Leigh Bodden
	32	Devin McCourty (R)
SS	31	Brandon Meriweather
	25	Pat Chung
FS	36	James Sanders
	30	Brandon McGowan

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Stephen Gostkowski
KR	19	Brandon Tate
P	6	Zoltan Mesko (R)
PR	19	Brandon Tate

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Bill Belichick
Defensive Coach: Corwin Brown
Quarterbacks: Bill O'Brien
Special Teams: Scott O'Brien
Defensive Backs: Josh Boyer
Running Backs: Ivan Fears
Wide Receivers: Chad O'Shea
Assistant Head Coach / Offensive Line: Dante Scarnecchia
Defensive Line: Pepper Johnson
Linebackers: Matt Patricia
Strength and Conditioning: Mike Woicik
Assistant Strength and Conditioning: Harold Nash

FANTASY FLASH

Randy Moss has averaged 77 catches for 1,205 yards 12 touchdowns in his 12-year career. He has been even better over the last three seasons, averaging 83 receptions for 1,255 yards and 16 scores. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(10–6)*

Sept. 14	Buffalo		W	25–24
Sept. 20	at N.Y. Jets		L	9–16
Sept. 27	Atlanta		W	26–10
Oct. 4	Baltimore		W	27–21
Oct. 11	at Denver	(ot)	L	17–20
Oct. 18	Tennessee		W	59– 0
Oct. 25	at Tampa Bay		W	35– 7
Nov. 8	Miami		W	27–17
Nov. 15	at Indianapolis		L	34–35
Nov. 22	N.Y. Jets		W	31–14
Nov. 30	at New Orleans		L	17–38
Dec. 6	at Miami		L	21–22
Dec. 13	Carolina		W	20–10
Dec. 20	at Buffalo		W	17–10
Dec. 27	Jacksonville		W	35– 7
Jan. 3	at Houston		L	27–34
Postseason				
Jan. 10	Baltimore			14–33

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at N.Y. Jets	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Oct. 4	at Miami (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Week 5	BYE	
Oct. 17	Baltimore	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	at San Diego	4:15 pm
Oct. 31	Minnesota	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Pittsburgh	8:20 pm
Nov. 21	Indianapolis	4:15 pm
Nov. 25	at Detroit	12:30 pm
Dec. 6	N.Y. Jets (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 12	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Green Bay	8:20 pm
Dec. 26	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Miami	1:00 pm

Steve Moore

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new york JETS

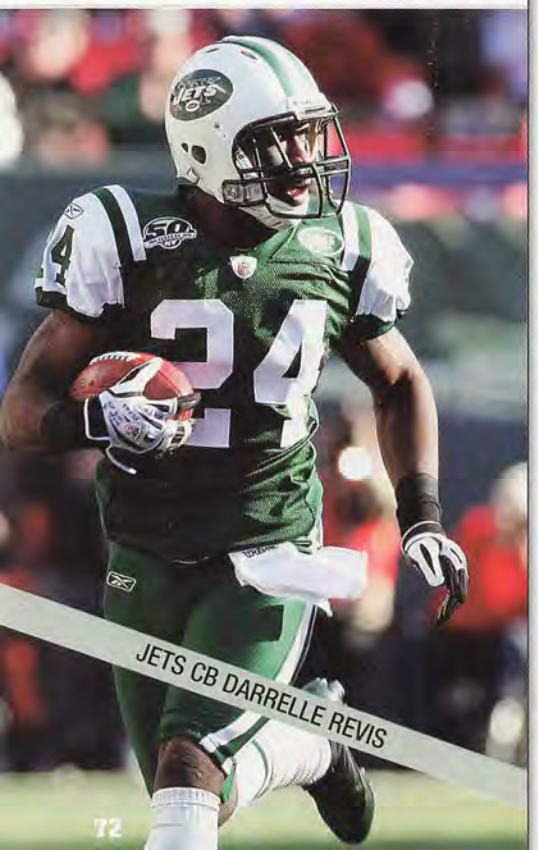
1 AFC EAST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
PRESIDENT/CEO: Woody Johnson
GENERAL MANAGER: Mike Tannenbaum
STADIUM: Meadowlands Stadium (82,500)
SURFACE: FieldTurf
WEBSITE: www.newyorkjets.com
TICKETS: 516-560-8200
TRAINING CAMP: SUNY Cortland (Cortland, N.Y.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	4	
2006	10	PLAYOFFS
2007	4	
2008	9	
2009	9	PLAYOFFS

PLAYOFFS *Playoffs*


JETS CB DARRELLE REVIS

The Jets' objective is to be 23 minutes better than last season. They came that close to the Super Bowl in Rex Ryan's first season, blowing a third quarter lead to the Colts in the AFC Championship Game. Instead of standing pat, which would have been the easy thing to do, the Jets performed major surgery on their roster, acquiring several high-profile players.

LaDainian Tomlinson. Santonio Holmes. Antonio Cromartie. Jason Taylor. It almost sounds like fantasy football, but the Jets' only fantasy is winning a Super Bowl, something they haven't done in 41 years. They have the talent, not to mention a young quarterback with plenty of upside, but it's going to be a challenge to integrate so many new parts. The unabashed Ryan, of course, is predicting big things.

"I'm betting on this team," he says. "I think this team is going to be special."

COACHES Ryan does a lot of talking, but his team usually backs him up. Strategically, the biggest challenge will be finding a comfortable run-pass balance on offense. They want to loosen the reins on quarterback Mark Sanchez, but they don't want to sacrifice their run-oriented personality — or, as Ryan likes to call it, Ground and Pound. He has three strong coordinators in Brian Schottenheimer (offense), Mike Pettine (defense) and Mike Westhoff (special teams). Schottenheimer, who could earn a head coaching job after the season, will have more weapons in his arsenal. His toughest job might be keeping everybody happy and making sure Sanchez doesn't regress. Pettine won't call the defensive plays, but he's a bright, organized coach who complements Ryan in a yin and yang kind of way. Westhoff has the chore of breaking in a new kicker, and that can be nerve-racking. ***GRADE: A***

QUARTERBACKS If Sanchez can build on his performance during last season's playoff run, the Jets will be hard to beat. His decision-making improved tremendously; he did a better job of reading defenses and not forcing balls into coverage. He finally seems to realize that he doesn't have to make every play, and that it's OK to throw to a check-down receiver. Sanchez, protected last season by the league's top rushing attack, will get more opportunities to throw. He needs to work on his accuracy and do a better job off play-action. Surprisingly, the Jets were one of the least effective play-action passing teams last season. He will have a talented receiving corps, but there could be chemistry issues. Because of postseason knee surgery, he missed a chunk of the offseason, robbing him of field time with his new teammates. He is expected to be 100 percent by the start of training camp. If he goes down, the Jets are in trouble. Kellen Clemens can win a game or two in relief, but he doesn't have the talent or experience to be a long-term solution. ***GRADE: B-***

RUNNING BACKS It's not often that the No. 1 rushing team dumps two key backs, but the Jets did that with Thomas Jones and Leon Washington. The feature role should go to Shonn Greene, one of the driving forces behind last season's run. Greene ended the regular season with 540 yards on 108 carries for a 5.0-yard average. He broke out with 144 yards and two touchdowns in a win at Oakland and then added two more 100-yard games in the playoffs — 135 at Cincinnati and 128 at San Diego. Greene can be a devastating blend of power and speed, but the concern is durability. He was slowed last season by minor injuries and some weight issues. The insurance policy is the Canton-bound Tomlinson, who has something to prove. He looked spent last season for the Chargers, but the Jets believe he can recapture some of his past glory. Why? Better line than San Diego, a less demanding role and a comfort level with the scheme. (Schottenheimer is a former Chargers assistant.) The plan is to get Tomlinson about 12 to 15 touches per game, which might be too ambitious. They're counting on him to help as a receiver out of the backfield, an element that was missing in '09 after Washington's season-ending leg injury. Fullback Tony Richardson is back for his 16th (and probably last) season. Remarkably, he's still an effective blocker. Fourth-round pick Joe McKnight, explosive in the open field, will get a chance to replace Washington as the third down back. ***GRADE: B***

RECEIVERS This might be the most improved area on the team. The Jets retained Braylon Edwards on a one-year contract and acquired Santonio Holmes from the Steelers at a marked-down price, due to off-field issues and a four-game drug suspension that starts in Week 1. If Holmes behaves, he could be the missing ingredient on offense, an explosive receiver who can attack vertically and pile up yards after the catch. Edwards has that kind of talent, too, but he's maddeningly inconsistent, a drop waiting to happen. Like Holmes, Edwards is in a contract year, so he should be highly motivated. It also could backfire if they put personal agendas above the team. The Jets still have the glue to the unit, Jerricho Cotchery, a terrific possession receiver

Revis: Jim McIsaac/Getty Images; Sanchez: Steve Moore

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Honey, I Shrunk the Coach Ryan won't have himself to kick around anymore. The overweight coach, who likes to make fun of his eating habits and waistline, underwent lap-band surgery in the offseason. His goal is 250 pounds, a 100-pound drop.

Nice Touch Ryan is beloved by his assistant coaches. Here's an example of why: When the Jets stunned the Chargers last January in the playoffs, he sent a game ball to former Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer, father of Jets offensive coordinator Brian. The elder Schottenheimer was unceremoniously fired by the Chargers. Ryan, sensing the importance of the win to their family, made sure the old man had a forever keepsake.

News Flash During the regular season, the offensive line has a daily "Breakfast Club" in its meeting room. The players bring in breakfast from the cafeteria and spend 10 minutes or so updating line coach Bill Callahan on news headlines. Callahan is so immersed in gameplanning that he doesn't have time to watch the news or read a paper. This often leads to lively discussions among the players and their coach.

2009 STATS

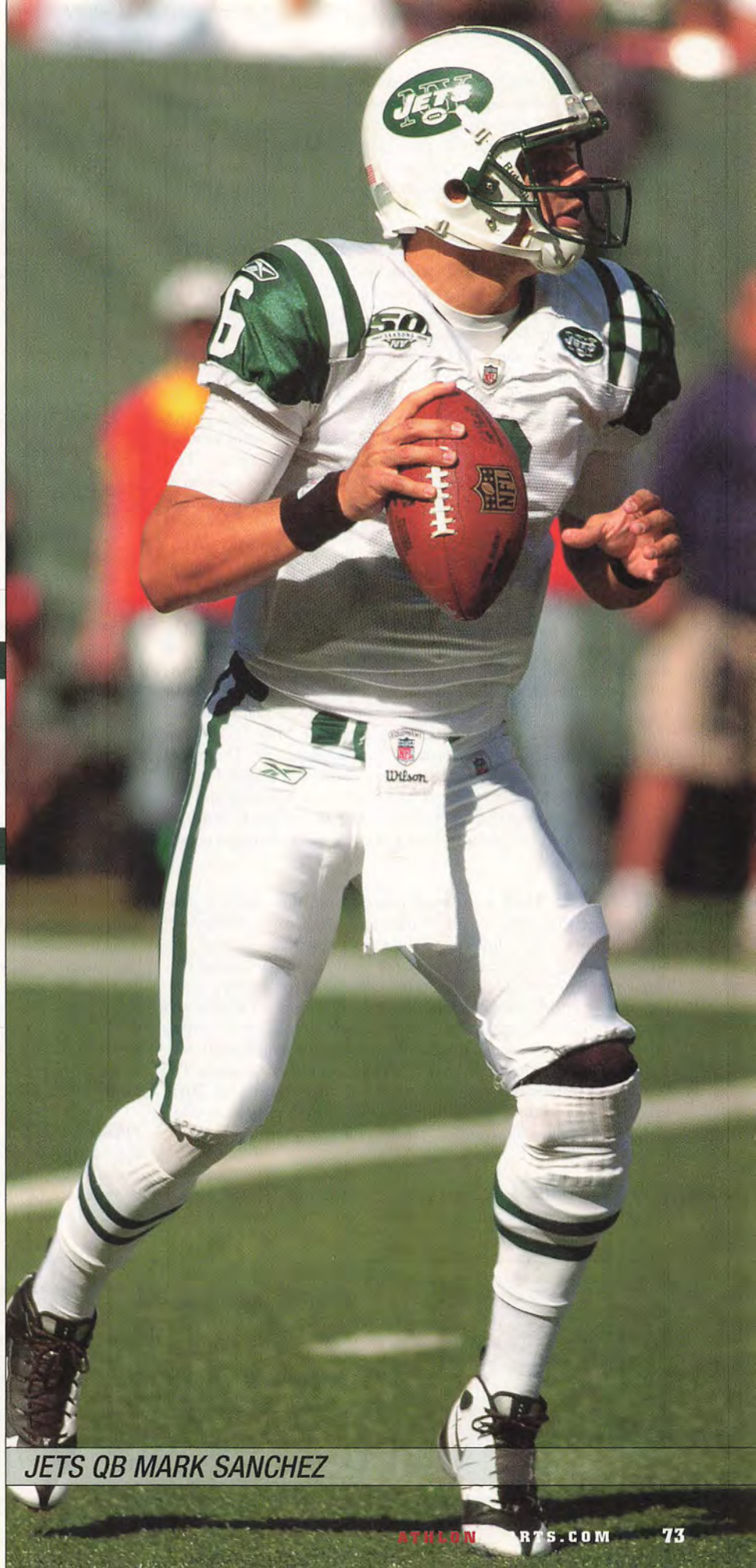
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	321.0	20	11
Rushing	172.2	1	1
Passing	148.8	31	15
Scoring	21.8	17	9
Punt Returns	9.1	13	6
Kick Returns	24.4	T4	2
Red Zone TD %	49.0	20	10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	252.3	1	1
Rushing	98.6	8	4
Passing	153.7	1	1
Scoring	14.8	1	1
Interceptions	17	T13	T6
Sacks	32	T18	T9
Turnover Differential	+1	T16	T8

SCOUTING THE JETS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP NEW YORK

"They added the third corner in the draft in Kyle Wilson, and boy, was that an impressive move. They now have three guys that can play man, and if you're bringing the heat and pressuring, that gives the defensive coordinator confidence when you have three players that can cover like that. With the addition of Antonio Cromartie, you're adding a very good press corner with size, length and ball skills. My concern is whether or not you're getting Mr. 2007, or getting the player whose performance wasn't similar to his 2007 performance. If you get the 2007 guy, this is a real good move. But if you're getting the '08 or '09, guy, I think you might be disappointed. … Jason Taylor's not what he once was, but as a third outside linebacker, he should be a good contributor for them. … They're moving Vernon Gholston to defensive end, but that's a desperation move. Sometimes pass-rushers take some time to develop, but two different coaches have figured out that maybe he just doesn't have it."



JETS QB MARK SANCHEZ

who will slide into the slot in three-receiver packages. He should be at his best, working the seams and intermediate zones. This should be tight end Dustin Keller's year to break out — he has the talent — but you wonder if he will get lost in the suddenly crowded mix. For some reason, he and Sanchez didn't click until late in the season. Backup Ben Hartsock, who has four receptions in the past two seasons, is strictly a run-blocker. ***GRADE: A-***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN If it ain't broke … try to fix it anyway. The line emerged as a dominant blocking unit last season, but the Jets decided to shake it up, releasing nine-time Pro Bowl guard Alan Faneca. Anybody ever hear of chemistry? He will be replaced by second-year backup Matt Slauson or second-round pick Vladimir Ducasse, a 330-pounder out of UMass who has the skills but will need time to develop. The front office is taking a chance, but it believes the rest of the line is good enough to carry the new left guard. Indeed, the four holdovers are a blend of young, ascending players (center Nick Mangold and left tackle D'Brickashaw Ferguson) and solid veterans (right guard Brandon Moore and right tackle Damien Woody). This line has no glaring weaknesses, and it could be better after a season in a zone-blocking scheme. It all depends on Faneca's replacement. ***GRADE: A-***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Warning to opposing centers and guards: The big fella is back. Tackle Kris Jenkins, who missed most of last season because of knee surgery, will be in the middle again, drawing double-teams. His presence changes the complexion of the defense. The question is, can the Jets count on him for a full season? He's 31 and has had durability issues. His backup is Sione Pouha, who won't cause offenses to alter their blocking schemes. The rest of the line includes no difference-makers. Defensive end Shaun Ellis, 33, the longest-tenured Jet, might be on his last legs. Look for Mike DeVito, an underrated, powerful inside player, to have a bigger role. The rest of the unit is guesswork. The coaches like massive end Ropati Pitoitua (6'8", 310), but he's unproven. Clearly, the Jets are counting on Ryan and his scheme to camouflage the shortcomings and lack of depth on the line. In a base 3-4 defense, they can get away with unspectacular line play. ***GRADE: B-***

LINEBACKERS Three starters are over 30, and they added a pass-rushing specialist, Jason Taylor, who becomes the second oldest player on the team at 36. At linebacker, the team color should be gray, not green. Coupled with the aging line, the front-seven speed could be a major concern, especially against teams that like to run on the perimeter. On the upside, this is a versatile group. Taylor, Calvin Pace and Bryan Thomas are capable of playing outside linebacker or getting into a three-point stance at end. Pace, who has double-digit sack potential, and Taylor should be the best edge rushers on the team. The Jets have a formidable inside tandem with Bart Scott and David Harris, who is destined for multiple Pro Bowls. Both players are effective blitzers, allowing Ryan to scheme up his diabolical overload blitzes. ***GRADE: B+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Jets finished No. 1 in pass defense, so what did they do? Ripped apart the secondary, unloading three of the top five players, including safety Kerry Rhodes. But here's the crazy thing: The revamped unit could be better than the old one. Any secondary with Darrelle Revis has to be good — he's arguably the best cover corner in the league — but now he has a couple of new partners who should thrive in the man-to-man scheme. If former Charger cornerback Antonio Cromartie can revert to his 2007 form (and remembers how to tackle somebody), the secondary could be scary. The Jets also upgraded at nickelback, using their first-round pick on Kyle Wilson, another man-to-man specialist. Jim Leonhard, who runs the show from his safety spot, will have to break in a new partner, Brodney Pool, a Browns castoff. Unlike his predecessor, Rhodes, Pool isn't afraid to hit, but he lacks Rhodes' range in pass coverage. Ryan likes to use a lot of defensive backs, and he has a lot to choose from. This is a deep group. ***GRADE: A-***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Antonio Cromartie	CB	San Diego	Alan Faneca	G	Arizona
Nick Folk	K	Dallas	Jay Feely	K	Arizona
Santonio Holmes	WR	Pittsburgh	Thomas Jones	RB	Kansas City
Brodney Pool	S	Cleveland	Kerry Rhodes	S	Arizona
Jason Taylor	LB	Miami	Lito Sheppard	CB	Minnesota
LaDainian Tomlinson	RB	San Diego	Leon Washington	RB	Seattle

The Jets will regret the Tomlinson-for-Jones swap; it's a clear downgrade. Jones had a bad finish, but people tend to forget that he rushed for 1,402 yards last season. Tomlinson looked very old last season in San Diego. The placekicking Folk-for-Feely exchange also could come back to haunt them. Overall, the Jets messed with good chemistry, unloading respected team leaders, but they were willing to sacrifice that for relatively young, talented players such as Holmes and Cromartie. These moves were made with "now" in mind, the future be damned. They placed more emphasis on physical talent than intangibles.

SPECIALISTS The headline writers will have a lot of fun with Nick Folk's name. So will the fans — in a nasty kind of way — if he kicks the way he did last season for the Cowboys. Folk, who replaces the solid Jay Feely, went from a Pro Bowl kicker (20-of-22 in 2008) to a train wreck (18-of-28 in '09). He attributes his disastrous season to hip surgery, which messed with his mechanics. He expects to be healthy this season, and he'd better be or else the Jets, who tend to play a lot of close games, will rue the day they let Feely walk over a few hundred grand. Punter Steve Weatherford is adequate. Two rookies, Wilson and McKnight, could step into the punt and kickoff return roles, respectively. The versatile Brad Smith also is a candidate for the latter. ***GRADE: C+***

FINAL ANALYSIS It's Super Bowl or bust for Ryan & Co. The Jets upgraded their talent on paper, but it comes down to two things: Building chemistry and hoping Sanchez takes the next step and becomes one of the NFL's top quarterbacks. If the answers are yes and yes, the Jets could end their 41-year Super Bowl drought.

NEW YORK IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Kyle Wilson	CB	5-10	194	Boise State
2. Vladimir Ducasse	G	6-5	330	UMass
4. Joe McKnight	RB	5-11	194	USC
5. John Conner	FB	5-11	246	Kentucky

Another small class by general manager Mike Tannenbaum. There will be no rookie starters unless Ducasse can make the enormous jump from the FCS to the NFL. Wilson will be a nickelback. McKnight will get a shot to be the third down back and return kickoffs. Conner will be a killer on special teams before replacing incumbent fullback Tony Richardson in 2011.

Ric Fogel

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Ainge, Erik	QB	6-5	221	2	Tennessee	D5-08	D5-NYJ-08
11	Clemens, Kellen	QB	6-2	221	4	Oregon	D2-06	D2-NYJ-06
7	O'Connell, Kevin	QB	6-5	225	2	San Diego State	T-Det-09	D3-NE-08
6	Sanchez, Mark	QB	6-2	225	1	USC	D1-09	D1-NYJ-09

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43	Davis, Jason	FB	5-10	242	2	Illinois	W-Chi-09	FA-Phi-06
23	Greene, Shonn	RB	5-11	226	1	Iowa	D3-09	D3-NYJ-09
49	Richardson, Tony	FB	6-1	238	15	Auburn	FA-Min-08	FA-Dal-94
21	Tomlinson, LaDainian	RB	5-10	221	9	TCU	FA-SD-10	D1-SD-01
32	Washington, Chauncey	RB	5-11	222	2	USC	FA-09	D7-Jac-08

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
88	Allison, Aundrae	WR	6-0	198	3	East Carolina	W-Min-09	D5-Min-07
87	Clowney, David	WR	6-0	188	2	Virginia Tech	FA-07	D5-GB-07
89	Cotchery, Jerricho	WR	6-0	203	6	NC State	D4a-04	D4a-NYJ-04
19	Davis, Britt	WR	6-3	205	1	Northern Illinois	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
17	Edwards, Braylon	WR	6-3	215	5	Michigan	T-Cle-09	D1-Cle-05
84	Hartsock, Ben	TE	6-4	270	6	Ohio State	FA-09	D3-Ind-04
14	Henry, Marcus	WR	6-4	212	1	Kansas	D6-08	D6-NYJ-08
10	Holmes, Santonio	WR	5-11	192	4	Ohio State	T-Pit-10	D1-Pit-06
81	Keller, Dustin	TE	6-2	248	2	Purdue	D1b-08	D1b-NYJ-08
82	Mulligan, Matthew	TE	6-4	270	1	Maine	W-Ten-09	FA-Mia-08
16	Smith, Brad	WR	6-2	210	4	Missouri	D4a-06	D4a-NYJ-06
83	Woodhead, Danny	WR	5-9	195	2	Chadron State	FA-08	FA-NYJ-08

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
60	Ferguson, D'Brickashaw	T	6-6	310	4	Virginia	D1a-06	D1a-NYJ-06
71	Gay, Dan	T	6-4	303	1	Baylor	FA-09	FA-SD-09
78	Hunter, Wayne	T	6-5	320	6	Hawaii	FA-07	D3-Sea-03
74	Mangold, Nick	C	6-4	305	4	Ohio State	D1b-06	D1b-NYJ-06
65	Moore, Brandon	G	6-3	305	7	Illinois	FA-03	FA-NYJ-02
56	Parenton, Michael	C	6-2	287	1	Tulane	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
68	Slauson, Matt	G	6-5	315	1	Nebraska	D6-09	D6-NYJ-09
75	Turner, Robert	OL	6-4	308	2	New Mexico	FA-07	FA-NYJ-07
67	Woody, Damien	OL	6-3	330	11	Boston College	FA-Det-08	D1-NE-99

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70	DeVito, Mike	DE	6-3	305	3	Maine	FA-07	FA-NYJ-07
92	Ellis, Shaun	DE	6-5	285	10	Tennessee	D1a-00	D1a-NYJ-00
50	Gholston, Vernon	LB	6-3	264	2	Ohio State	D1a-08	D1a-NYJ-08
77	Jenkins, Kris	DT	6-4	360	9	Maryland	T-Car-08	D2-Car-01
63	Kroul, Matt	DL	6-3	280	1	Iowa	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
79	Pitoitua, Ropati	DE	6-8	310	1	Washington State	FA-08	FA-NYJ-08
91	Pouha, Sione	DT	6-3	325	5	Utah	D3-05	D3-NYJ-05
61	Steinkuhler, Ty	DL	6-3	280	1	Nebraska	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
54	Cummings, Kenwin	LB	6-3	250	1	Wingate	FA-08	FA-NYJ-08
52	Harris, David	LB	6-2	245	3	Michigan	D2-07	D2-NYJ-07
56	Laury, Lance	LB	6-2	237	4	South Carolina	FA-Sea-10	FA-Sea-06
58	Mauga, Joshua	LB	6-1	243	1	Nevada	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
97	Pace, Calvin	LB	6-4	265	7	Wake Forest	FA-Ari-08	D1-Ari-03
57	Scott, Bart	LB	6-2	240	8	Southern Illinois	FA-Bal-09	FA-NYJ-02
	Taylor, Jason	LB	6-6	255	13	Akron	FA-Mia-10	D3-Mia-97
99	Thomas, Bryan	LB	6-4	266	8	UAB	D1-02	D1-NYJ-02
55	Westerman, Jamaal	LB	6-3	255	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
98	Wright, Rodrique	DL	6-5	300	1	Texas	FA-10	D7-Mia-06

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34	Cole, Marquice	CB	5-10	190	1	Northwestern	FA-09	FA-Oak-07
30	Coleman, Drew	CB	5-9	180	4	TCU	D6-06	D6-NYJ-06
42	Condren, Brannon	FS	6-1	205	3	Troy	FA-09	D4-Ind-07
31	Cromartie, Antonio	CB	6-2	203	4	Florida State	T-SD-10	D1-SD-06
44	Ihedigbo, James	S	6-1	210	3	Massachusetts	FA-08	FA-NYJ-07
36	Leonhard, Jim	S	5-8	186	5	Wisconsin	FA-Bal-09	FA-Buf-05
21	Lowery, Dwight	CB	5-11	198	2	San Jose State	D4-08	D4-NYJ-08
22	Pool, Brodney	S	6-2	210	5	Oklahoma	FA-Cle-09	D2-Cle-05
24	Revis, Darrelle	CB	5-11	198	3	Pittsburgh	D1-07	D1-NYJ-07
33	Smith, Eric	S	6-1	205	4	Michigan State	D3b-06	D3b-NYJ-06

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2	Folk, Nick	K	6-1	222	3	Arizona	FA-10	D6-Dal-07
9	Weatherford, Steve	P	6-3	210	4	Illinois	FA-09	FA-NO-06

Steve Moore

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	17	Braylon Edwards
	16	Brad Smith
WR	89	Jerricho Cotchery
	10	Santonio Holmes
LT	60	D'Brickashaw Ferguson
	78	Wayne Hunter
LG	68	Matt Slauson
		Vladimir Ducasse (R)
C	74	Nick Mangold
	75	Robert Turner
RG	65	Brandon Moore
	68	Matt Slauson
RT	67	Damien Woody
	78	Wayne Hunter
TE	81	Dustin Keller
	84	Ben Hartsock
QB	6	Mark Sanchez
	11	Kellen Clemens
FB	49	Tony Richardson
		John Conner (R)
RB	23	Shonn Greene
	21	LaDainian Tomlinson

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	92	Shaun Ellis
	50	Vernon Gholston
NT	77	Kris Jenkins
	91	Sione Pouha
DE	70	Mike DeVito
	79	Ropati Pitoitua
OLB	97	Calvin Pace
	55	Jamaal Westerman
ILB	57	Bart Scott
	54	Kenwin Cummings
ILB	52	David Harris
	54	Kenwin Cummings
OLB	99	Bryan Thomas
		Jason Taylor
CB	24	Darrelle Revis
		Kyle Wilson (R)
CB	31	Antonio Cromartie
	26	Dwight Lowery
S	36	Jim Leonhard
	44	James Ihedigbo
S	22	Brodney Pool
	33	Eric Smith

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Nick Folk
KR		Joe McKnight (R)
P	9	Steve Weatherford
PR		Kyle Wilson (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Rex Ryan
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Schottenheimer
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Pettine
Special Teams Coordinator: Mike Westhoff
Assistant Special Teams: Ben Kotwica
Quarterbacks: Matt Cavanaugh
Running Backs: Anthony Lynn
Wide Receivers: Henry Ellard
Tight Ends/Asst. Offensive Line: Mike Devlin
Asst. Head Coach/Offensive Line: Bill Callahan
Offensive Assistant: Mike Bloomgren
Defensive Line: Mark Carrier
Sr. Defensive Asst./Linebackers: Bob Sutton
Defensive Backs: Dennis Thurman
Defensive Assistant: Jeff Weeks
Quality Control - Defense: Jim O'Neil
Head Strength and Conditioning: Sal Alosi
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Kyle Thorne

FANTASY FLASH

After running the ball only 108 times for 540 yards during 14 regular-season games, rookie **Shonn Greene** carried it 54 times for 304 yards in three playoff appearances. He had 19 or more carries in only three of those 17 games, but he averaged 136 yards and 1.3 scores in them. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(9–7)*

Sept. 13	at Houston	W	24– 7
Sept. 20	New England	W	16– 9
Sept. 27	Tennessee	W	24–17
Oct. 4	at New Orleans	L	10–24
Oct. 12	at Miami	L	27–31
Oct. 18	Buffalo (ot)	L	13–16
Oct. 25	at Oakland	W	38– 0
Nov. 1	Miami	L	25–30
Nov. 15	Jacksonville	L	22–24
Nov. 22	at New England	L	14–31
Nov. 29	Carolina	W	17– 6
Dec. 3	at Buffalo	W	19–13
Dec. 13	at Tampa Bay	W	26– 3
Dec. 20	Atlanta	L	7–10
Dec. 27	at Indianapolis	W	29–15
Jan. 3	Cincinnati	W	37– 0
Postseason			
Jan. 9	at Cincinnati	W	24–14
Jan. 17	at San Diego	W	17–14
Jan. 24	at Indianapolis	L	17–30

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 13	Baltimore (Mon.)	7:00 pm
Sept. 19	New England	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	at Miami	8:20 pm
Oct. 3	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Oct. 11	Minnesota (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 17	at Denver	4:05 pm
Week 7	BYE	
Oct. 31	Green Bay	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Houston	1:00 pm
Nov. 25	Cincinnati (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 6	at New England (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 12	Miami	4:15 pm
Dec. 19	at Pittsburgh	4:15 pm
Dec. 26	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Buffalo	1:00 pm

baltimore RAVENS

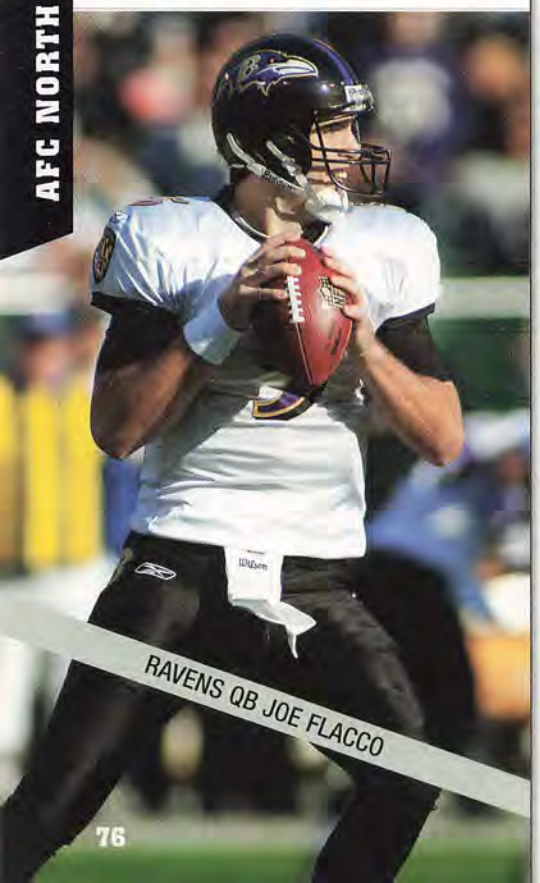
1 AFC NORTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Steve Bisciotti
PRESIDENT: Richard Cass
GENERAL MANAGER: Ozzie Newsome
STADIUM: M&T Bank Stadium (71,008)
SURFACE: Sportexe Momentum Turf
WEBSITE: www.baltimoreravens.com
TICKETS: 410-261-7283
TRAINING CAMP: McDaniel College (Westminster, Md.)

Five-Year Win Trend

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



RAVENS QB JOE FLACCO

Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome couldn't stop smiling. He had acquired Anquan Boldin, ending a long quest for a star wide receiver and, at least to an extent, redeeming a rare mistake he has regretted for years. It was a pedestrian 40 time that scared him off from drafting Boldin in 2003. But after landing the three-time Pro Bowl selection in a trade with Arizona, Newsome doesn't have to lament that decision any longer.

"There's not too many times that you get a chance to recover from a mistake," Newsome says. "I got blinded a little bit and didn't appreciate the football player as much as I should have. It took me seven years, but I finally got it right."

In addition to landing Boldin, Newsome retained veteran possession receiver Derrick Mason and signed deep threat Donté Stallworth. And just like that, Newsome had overhauled one of the worst groups of receivers in the league to create a viable unit that should help Baltimore gain traction as a potential Super Bowl contender.

COACHES Since arriving in Baltimore, John Harbaugh has done nothing but win. And he has done it through demanding practices and painstaking attention to detail. Harbaugh remains immersed in every aspect of the team. He is adept at instant-replay challenges, but his clock management needs some work. Defensive coordinator Greg Mattison has maintained a tradition of stopping the run. He adopted a bend-but-don't-break approach out of necessity last season, but he'll run a more aggressive scheme this season. The pass rush must get a lot better. Offensive coordinator Cam Cameron loves to run the ball, and he deserves a lot of credit for ensuring that all-purpose back Ray Rice spearheaded a physical running game. The passing game nose-dived at the end of last season, but with better personnel outside and reinforcements at tight end, Cameron's creativity could be on display this year. ***GRADE: B+***

QUARTERBACKS Equipped with every tool a passer could need, towering starter Joe Flacco has won three of five career playoff starts. He spent the offseason building chemistry with his new targets, and the Ravens also want him to gain strength and keep refining his mechanics. They hired Jim Zorn as quarterbacks coach to help him achieve some rather high standards. "There are terms like 'elite quarterback' and 'franchise quarterback,'" Harbaugh says. "All of those things are where we expect Joe to go. The expectation is to be the winningest quarterback in the NFL." Former Heisman winner Troy Smith badly wants an exit ticket out of town, but the Ravens aren't inclined to trade him, and no suitors have emerged. He's a competent backup with a lot more swagger than the usual second-stringer. Although he's slated to compete with John Beck, Smith has little to worry about. ***GRADE: B***

RUNNING BACKS Rice busted out in 2009, a season that ended with Pro Bowl recognition. He rushed for 1,339 yards and caught 78 passes for another 702 yards, giving him 2,041 yards from scrimmage to rank second in the NFL behind Chris Johnson. "I'm never a guy who's satisfied," Rice says. "You set goals, and this league is all about reinventing yourself. Guys have to say, 'He's an overall football player.' You're no longer just a scatback." The Ravens' backfield is loaded. Willis McGahee is a powerful former Pro Bowler and one of the top backups in the NFL. He rushed for a dozen touchdowns last year and was retained despite his hefty $3.45 million salary. He has accepted his complementary role and busts through arm tackles. Rice's bodyguard is Pro Bowl fullback Le'Ron McClain, a 260-pounder who delivers bruising lead blocks. He can also grind out tough yards and has enough moves to make people miss in the open field. ***GRADE: A-***

RECEIVERS Boldin rejuvenates a dormant passing game with his toughness, imposing size and ability to run after the catch. Watch for Boldin on the post, slant and out patterns. His presence should allow Flacco to evolve beyond his old habits of throwing almost exclusively to Mason and Rice. Mason, 36, remains in outstanding condition and has a knack for finding the hole in the defense. Stallworth is a burner but has been dogged by durability issues and off-field problems. He was suspended from the Browns last season following a DUI manslaughter conviction. Former first-round pick Mark Clayton has been a disappointment, and Demetrius Williams might struggle to make the roster after the team drafted David Reed, an ultra-productive slot receiver who draws high marks for his shiftiness and grit. Todd Heap played more snaps than any tight end in the league last year. Not as explosive as he used to be, he's still a sound pass-catching tight end with solid blocking skills. The Ravens drafted two potential successors for Heap, Ed Dickson and Dennis Pitta. Dickson is suited to play immediately with his speed and soft hands. Pitta could contribute as an athletic H-back. ***GRADE: B-***

Flacco, Rice: Peter Brouillet

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

On the Rise Highly regarded director of player personnel Eric DeCosta withdrew his name from consideration for the Seahawks' GM search this offseason. DeCosta is regarded as a strong candidate to eventually succeed Ravens GM Ozzie Newsome. "Ozzie is happy, plans on staying a long time, and we'll talk to Eric and try to build in some incentives to reward that patience," owner Steve Bisciotti says. "If he stays and takes over Ozzie's responsibilities, five, 10 years from now, it would be great for me and Baltimore."

Remorseful Wide receiver Donté Stallworth pleaded guilty to DUI manslaughter last year. He served 24 days in jail and was suspended for all of last season. "It's something I deal with every day," Stallworth says. "If I could go back and take that night over, I would. I'm not a bad person."

Renaissance Man Defensive end Trevor Pryce owns a record label called Outlook Music Co. and has written and sold two movie screenplays and two television scripts, including a cartoon called Brother Goose. Pryce released an album called *The Turntable Club*, which features him playing guitar, keyboard, drums and bass.

2009 STATS

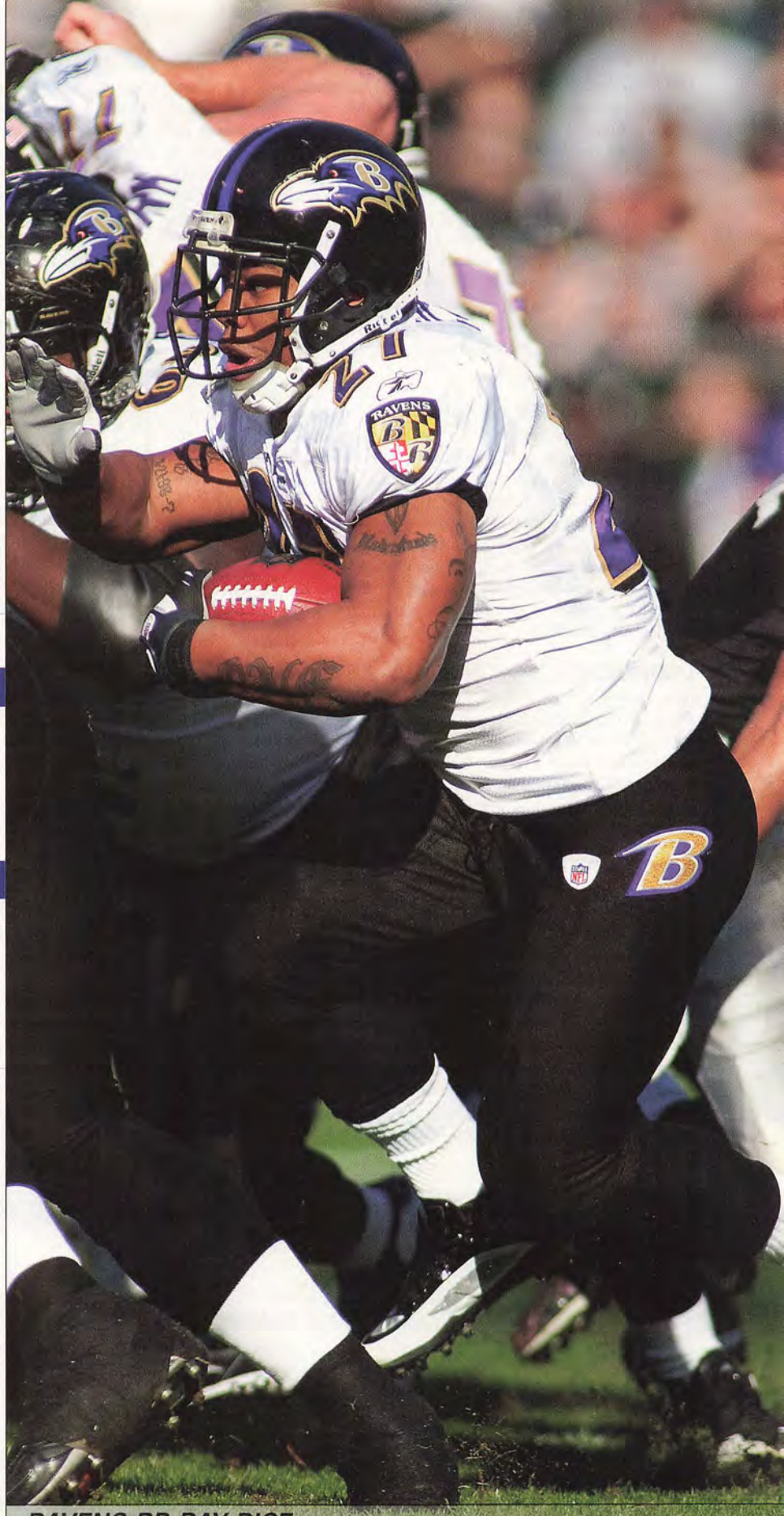
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	351.2	13	7
Rushing	137.5	5	4
Passing	213.7	18	7
Scoring	24.4	9	4
Punt Returns	7.4	20	9
Kick Returns	26.2	2	1
Red Zone TD %	52.6	11	5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	300.5	3	2
Rushing	93.2	5	2
Passing	207.2	T8	6
Scoring	16.3	3	2
Interceptions	22	T5	2
Sacks	32	T18	T9
Turnover Differential	+10	4	1

SCOUTING THE RAVENS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP BALTIMORE

"The Ravens have concentrated on getting players at the receiver position, and it will help their young quarterback. Getting Anquan Boldin and Donté Stallworth should open up their passing game. … They've got Ray Rice, who has been everything they thought and more. He's the kind of running back who can rush for 1,000 yards in a season and then get you another 500-plus yards receiving. … They've found an offense that suits them, and Cam Cameron does a great job of utilizing their personnel. … Defensively, it could be challenging. Their weak link is going to be their corners. And they should add some youth to the front seven. … They're OK at corner, but not great. Having Ed Reed back there, he's an eraser. He can cover numbers to numbers and wipes away some mistakes that most free safeties can't. … They are strong up the middle with Haloti Ngata, Ray Lewis and Ed Reed, but every year there is the question of when will age start to catch up with Lewis."



RAVENS RB RAY RICE

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Baltimore boasts one of the best sets of run-blockers around in the form of tackles Michael Oher and Jared Gaither. Oher is an aggressive, versatile lineman who is making the move to left tackle after playing on the right side as rookie last season. Gaither, who will now move to right tackle, has occasional concentration lapses and injury issues, but at 6'9", 340, he is capable of engulfing smaller defenders. His agility is hard to counteract. Ben Grubbs sometimes struggles at the point of attack but is still regarded as one of the league's top young guards. Right guard Marshal Yanda is all intensity and hand punch. He plays the game in an angry mood. Veteran center Matt Birk's leadership and technique galvanized the line last year. He controls bigger noseguards. Chris Chester is a valuable swingman as the primary backup at center and both guard spots. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Pro Bowl tackle Haloti Ngata is a disruptive, mobile presence inside. He is a massive lineman who collapses the pocket but isn't much of a pass-rusher. A former heavyweight wrestler, noseguard Kelly Gregg plays with outstanding leverage. Fully recovered from microfracture knee surgery two years ago, he should be able to hold off massive rookie Terrence Cody, who is slated for rotation duty. Cory Redding is coming off a subpar season in Seattle but has been installed as the starting left end, where he replaces Dwan Edwards. He has something to prove. Four-time Pro Bowler Trevor Pryce led the team in sacks last year and is set for a situational pass-rushing role. **GRADE: B-**

LINEBACKERS Middle linebacker Ray Lewis remains an active, intimidating tackler. Just ask Darren Sproles, whom Lewis decked on a crucial fourth down stop to preserve a win over San Diego last year. The key to the defense is the ability of outside linebacker Terrell Suggs to get back in shape after reporting to training camp way too heavy last season at 280 pounds. He was an enigma for much of the 2009 season. Suggs has already shed a lot of weight and has recovered from a sprained knee. Suggs' backup, Paul Kruger, has bulked up to 274 pounds to be more effective with his hand on the ground. Undrafted gem Dannell Ellerbe seized the inside linebacker job next to Lewis and displayed a lot of instincts and hitting ability. He consistently outperformed former third-round pick Tavares Gooden, who is usually battling injuries. One of the most reliable, underrated players on the team is strong-side linebacker Jarret Johnson. The Ravens drafted hybrid pass-rusher Sergio Kindle out of Texas, and he'll back up Johnson and get after the quarterback on third down. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Former NFL Defensive Player of the Year Ed Reed is a pure center fielder who sets up quarterbacks for mistakes. He contemplated retirement but is expected to return despite a painful pinched nerve in his neck that prevents him from being utilized much on blitzes and run support. Tom Zbikowski is a good backup to Reed. Strong safety Dawan Landry made an outstanding comeback from neck surgery and is a fearless hitter. He regained his old form by the end of the season. At cornerback, Fabian Washington and Lardarius Webb are recovering from torn ACLs. Washington is on target to make it back for the start of the season, but Webb will likely begin the season on the physically unable to perform list. Domonique Foxworth isn't a true shutdown cornerback, but he played much better in the second half of last season. He's a willing tackler and can run but doesn't make enough plays on the football. **GRADE: C**

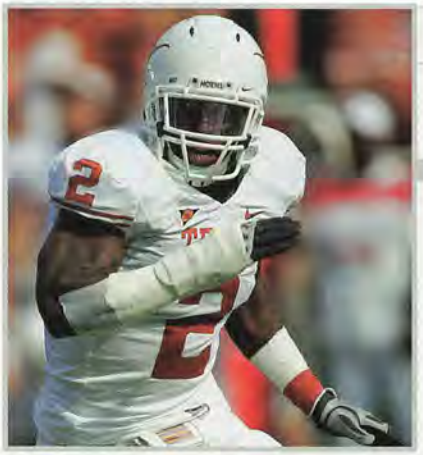
VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Anquan Boldin	WR	Arizona	Justin Bannan	DT	Denver
Cory Redding	DE	Seattle	Dwan Edwards	DE	Buffalo
Donté Stallworth	WR	Cleveland	L.J. Smith	TE	Free agent
			Adam Terry	T	Indianapolis
			Kelley Washington	WR	Free agent

The blockbuster trade for Boldin gives the Ravens the No. 1 wide receiver they've needed for years. Stallworth was a low-risk move. His speed and background with receivers coach Jim Hostler should pay dividends. Redding is more of a stopgap than a long-term solution at defensive end. The Ravens absorbed some serious hits on the defensive line with the departure of Bannan and Edwards. The Ravens didn't mind losing Terry, a soft, disappointing former second-round pick. He was always hurt. Smith didn't contribute much last year because of durability problems. The Ravens will miss Washington on special teams.

SPECIALISTS Kicker Billy Cundiff could have fared better in '09 if not for the fact that usually reliable long snapper Matt Katula faltered at the end of last season. Although the Ravens like Cundiff's distance and accuracy, they've made it clear they want to bring in competition for him. Sam Koch is an underrated punter whose hang time and ability to angle the ball rank him high among his peers. Two major injuries affected the special teams last season: ace coverage specialist Brendon Ayanbadejo's leg injury and dangerous kick returner Webb's shredded knee. Jalen Parmele and Reed figure to compete for kick return duties. Chris Carr is a solid but unspectacular punt returner who was benched in favor of Webb on kickoffs. **GRADE: C+**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Ravens have the look of a legitimate Super Bowl contender, with most of the pieces in place for a deep run. They have a stingy defense, a bulldozing running game, an above-average quarterback and, finally, a viable No. 1 wide receiver. The one concern is the lack of a shutdown corner, which could be a problem against some of the elite passing attacks. Still, this team has more than enough to get back to the Super Bowl for the first time in 10 years.

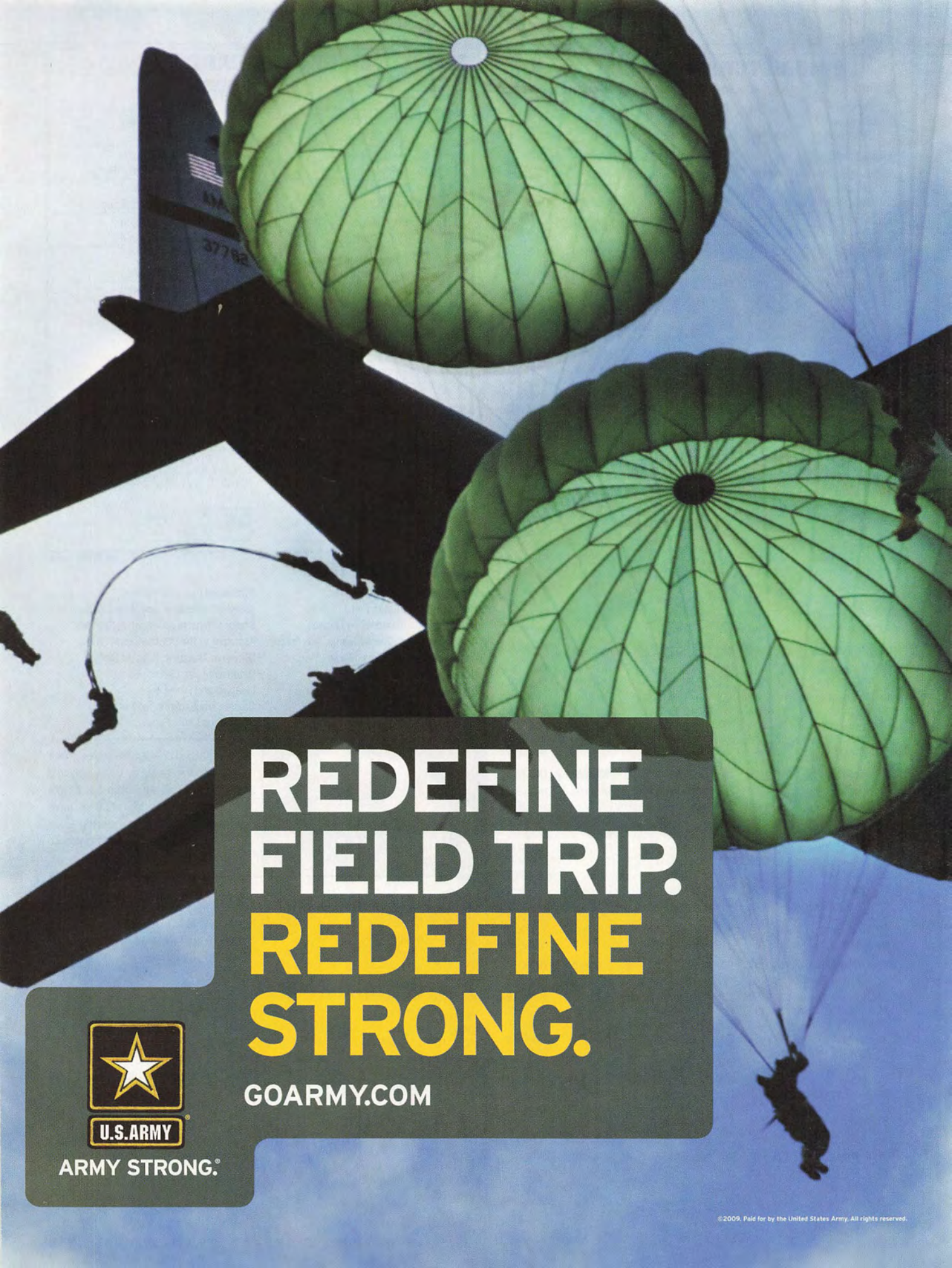


Paul Jasienski

BALTIMORE IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2. Sergio Kindle	OLB	6-3	250	Texas
2. Terrence Cody	DT	6-4	360	Alabama
3. Ed Dickson	TE	6-4	250	Oregon
4. Dennis Pitta	TE	6-4	245	BYU
5. David Reed	WR	6-0	190	Utah
5. Arthur Jones	DT	6-3	305	Syracuse
6. Ramon Harewood	T	6-6	340	Morehouse

Kindle has rare talent and size-speed combination, but he plummeted in the draft due to knee issues and off-field incidents. He is an explosive, violent hitter who should upgrade a lethargic pass rush. Cody is a dominant inside presence who adds beef to run defense and can block kicks. His weight must keep heading south. Dickson will be a quality backup to Todd Heap and could be his eventual successor. He can create separation downfield. Watch out for Pitta as a versatile H-back. Scouts love Reed's ability as a quick, tough slot receiver. If his knee is right, Jones could be a valuable rotation guy at tackle and end.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2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Beck, John	QB	6-2	215	3	BYU	FA-09	D2-Mia-07
5 Flacco, Joe	QB	6-6	235	2	Delaware	D1-08	D1-Bal-08
10 Smith, Troy	QB	6-0	225	3	Ohio State	D5-07	D5-Bal-07
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32 Lawrence, Matt	RB	6-1	209	1	Massachusetts	FA-08	FA-Chi-08
33 McClain, Le'Ron	FB	6-0	260	3	Alabama	D4b-07	D4b-Bal-07
23 McGahee, Willis	RB	6-0	235	7	Miami	T-Buf-07	D1-Buf-03
34 Parmele, Jalen	RB	5-11	220	2	Toledo	FA-08	D6-Mia-08
27 Rice, Ray	RB	5-8	210	2	Rutgers	D2-08	D2-Bal-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
81 Boldin, Anquan	WR	6-1	217	7	Florida State	T-Ari-10	D2-Ari-03
89 Clayton, Mark	WR	5-10	190	5	Oklahoma	D1-05	D1-Bal-05
83 Drew, Davon	TE	6-4	255	1	East Carolina	D5b-09	D5b-Bal-09
14 Harper, Justin	WR	6-3	215	2	Virginia Tech	D7a-08	D7a-Bal-08
86 Heap, Todd	TE	6-5	245	9	Arizona State	D1-01	D1-Bal-01
84 Jones, Edgar	TE	6-3	258	3	Southeast Missouri	FA-07	FA-Bal-07
85 Mason, Derrick	WR	5-10	195	13	Michigan State	FA-05	D4-Ten-97
16 Price, Maurice	WR	6-1	200	2	Charleston Southern	FA-09	FA-KC-07
13 Riley, Eron	WR	6-3	205	1	Duke	FA-09	FA-Bal-09
81 Smith, Marcus	WR	6-1	215	2	New Mexico	D4a-08	D4a-Bal-08
88 Sypniewski, Quinn	TE	6-6	270	4	Colorado	D5b-06	D5b-Bal-06
18 Stallworth, Donté	WR	6-0	220	7	Tennessee	FA-Cle-10	D1-NO-02
87 Williams, Demetrius	WR	6-2	202	4	Oregon	D4a-06	D4a-Bal-06
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
77 Birk, Matt	C	6-4	309	12	Harvard	FA-Min-09	D6-Min-98
65 Chester, Chris	G/C	6-3	315	4	Oklahoma	D2-06	D2-Bal-06
64 Cousins, Oniel	T	6-4	314	2	UTEP	D3c-08	D3c-Bal-08
71 Gaither, Jared	T	6-9	340	3	Maryland	SD5-07	SD5-Bal-07
66 Grubbs, Ben	G	6-3	315	3	Auburn	D1-07	D1-Bal-07
62 Hale, David	G/C	6-6	310	2	Weber State	D4b-08	D4b-Bal-08
72 Mattison, Bryan	G	6-3	295	2	Iowa	FA-08	FA-NYJ-08
79 Moll, Tony	G/T	6-5	311	4	Nevada	T-GB-09	D5-GB-06
74 Oher, Michael	T	6-4	310	1	Ole Miss	D1-09	D1-Bal-09
76 Reitz, Joe	T	6-7	305	2	Western Michigan	FA-08	FA-Bal-08
69 Rodgers, Stefan	T	6-5	317	3	Lambuth	FA-09	FA-Ten-05
73 Yanda, Marshal	G/T	6-3	313	3	Iowa	D3b-07	D3b-Bal-07
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
96 Divens, Lamar	DT	6-3	338	2	Tennessee State	FA-08	FA-SD-08
97 Gregg, Kelly	NT	6-0	315	10	Oklahoma	FA-00	D6-Cin-99
91 McKinney, Brandon	NT	6-2	360	4	Michigan State	FA-08	FA-SD-06
92 Ngata, Haloti	DT	6-4	345	4	Oregon	D1-06	D1-Bal-06
90 Pryce, Trevor	DE	6-5	290	13	Clemson	FA-06	D1-Den-97
93 Redding, Cory	DE	6-4	292	7	Texas	FA-Sea-10	D3-Det-03
98 Talavou, Kelly	NT	6-2	350	2	Utah	FA-08	FA-Atl-07
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
51 Ayanbadejo, Brendon	LB	6-1	225	7	UCLA	FA-Chi-08	FA-Atl-99
50 Barnes, Antwan	OLB	6-1	245	3	Florida International	D4a-07	D4a-Bal-07
54 Burgess, Prescott	OLB	6-3	247	3	Michigan	D6-07	D6-Bal-07
59 Ellerbe, Dannell	LB	6-1	243	1	Georgia	FA-09	FA-Bal-09
56 Gooden, Tavares	ILB	6-1	242	2	Miami	D3a-08	D3a-Bal-08
95 Johnson, Jarret	OLB	6-3	265	7	Alabama	D4a-03	D4a-Bal-03
99 Kruger, Paul	LB	6-4	274	1	Utah	D2-09	D2-Bal-09
52 Lewis, Ray	ILB	6-1	250	14	Miami	D1b-96	D1b-Bal-96
53 McClain, Jameel	LB	6-1	250	2	Syracuse	FA-08	FA-Bal-08
58 Phillips, Jason	ILB	6-1	244	1	TCU	D5a-09	D5a-Bal-09
55 Suggs, Terrell	OLB	6-3	260	7	Arizona State	D1a-03	D1a-Bal-03
68 VanDeSteeg, William	OLB	6-4	256	1	Minnesota	FA-09	FA-Bal-09
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
25 Carr, Chris	CB	5-10	180	5	Boise State	FA-Ten-09	FA-Oak-05
37 Fitzhugh, Keith	S	5-11	205	1	Mississippi State	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
24 Foxworth, Domonique	CB	5-11	180	5	Maryland	FA-Atl-09	D3-Den-05
40 Gerard, K.J.	S	6-1	192	1	Northern Arizona	FA-09	FA-Bal-09
26 Landry, Dawan	S	6-0	210	4	Georgia Tech	D5a-06	D5a-Bal-06
43 Nakamura, Haruki	S	5-10	200	2	Cincinnati	D6-08	D6-Bal-08
30 Paschal, Marcus	DB	6-0	201	2	Iowa	FA-09	FA-Phi-07
20 Reed, Ed	S	5-11	200	8	Miami	D1-02	D1-Bal-02
31 Washington, Fabian	CB	5-11	180	5	Nebraska	T-Oak-08	D1-Oak-05
21 Webb, Lardarius	CB	5-10	175	1	Nicholls State	D3-09	D3-Bal-09
29 Williams, Cary	CB	6-1	185	1	Washburn	FA-09	D7-Ten-08
28 Zbikowski, Tom	S	5-11	210	2	Notre Dame	D3b-08	D3b-Bal-08
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
7 Cundiff, Billy	K	6-1	207	5	Drake	FA-09	FA-Dal-02
70 Katula, Matt	LS	6-6	265	5	Wisconsin	FA-05	FA-Bal-05
4 Koch, Sam	P	6-1	220	4	Nebraska	D6a-06	D6a-Bal-06

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	81	Anquan Boldin
	18	Donté Stallworth
WR	85	Derrick Mason
	89	Mark Clayton
LT	74	Michael Oher
	64	Oniel Cousins
LG	66	Ben Grubbs
	65	Chris Chester
C	77	Matt Birk
	65	Chris Chester
RG	73	Marshal Yanda
	65	Chris Chester
RT	71	Jared Gaither
	64	Oniel Cousins
TE	86	Todd Heap
	80	Ed Dickson (R)
QB	5	Joe Flacco
	10	Troy Smith
FB	33	Le'Ron McClain
RB	27	Ray Rice
	23	Willis McGahee

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LDE	93	Cory Redding
	90	Trevor Pryce
NG	97	Kelly Gregg
	63	Terrence Cody (R)
DT	92	Haloti Ngata
	91	Brandon McKinney
OLB	95	Jarret Johnson
	49	Sergio Kindle (R)
ILB	52	Ray Lewis
	58	Jason Phillips
ILB	59	Dannell Ellerbe
	56	Tavares Gooden
OLB	55	Terrell Suggs
	99	Paul Kruger
CB	31	Fabian Washington
	21	Lardarius Webb
CB	24	Domonique Foxworth
	25	Chris Carr
SS	26	Dawan Landry
	28	Tom Zbikowski
FS	20	Ed Reed
	28	Tom Zbikowski

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Billy Cundiff
KR	34	Jalen Parmele
P	4	Sam Koch
PR	25	Chris Carr

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: John Harbaugh
Offensive Coordinator: Cam Cameron
Defensive Coordinator: Greg Mattison
Asst. Head Coach/Special Teams: Jerry Rosburg
Assistant Special Teams: Marwan Maalouf
Quarterbacks: Jim Zorn
Running Backs: Wilbert Montgomery
Wide Receivers: Jim Hostler
Tight Ends: Wade Harman
Offensive Line: John Matsko
Assistant Offensive Line: Andy Moeller
Senior Offensive Assistant: Al Saunders
Assistant to the Offense: Jason Brooks
Offensive Assistant: Craig Ver Steeg
Defensive Line: Clarence Brooks
Linebackers: Dean Pees
Outside Linebackers: Ted Monachino
Secondary: Chuck Pagano

FANTASY FLASH

Despite missing one or more games in four of his last five seasons, newly acquired wide receiver **Anquan Boldin** has caught 80 or more passes for 1,000 or more yards in four of his last five campaigns. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(9-7)*

Sept. 13	Kansas City		W	38–24
Sept. 20	at San Diego		W	31–26
Sept. 27	Cleveland		W	34– 3
Oct. 4	at New England		L	21–27
Oct. 11	Cincinnati		L	14–17
Oct. 18	at Minnesota		L	31–33
Nov. 1	Denver		W	30– 7
Nov. 8	at Cincinnati		L	7–17
Nov. 16	at Cleveland		W	16– 0
Nov. 22	Indianapolis		L	15–17
Nov. 29	Pittsburgh	(ot)	W	20–17
Dec. 7	at Green Bay		L	14–27
Dec. 13	Detroit		W	48– 3
Dec. 20	Chicago		W	31– 7
Dec. 27	at Pittsburgh		L	20–23
Jan. 3	at Oakland		W	21–13
Postseason				
Jan. 10	at New England		W	33–14
Jan. 16	at Indianapolis		L	3–20

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 13	at N.Y. Jets (Mon.)	7:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Denver	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at New England	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	Miami	1:00 pm
Nov. 11	at Atlanta (Thur.)	8:20 pm
Nov. 21	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	Pittsburgh	8:20 pm
Dec. 13	at Houston (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 19	New Orleans	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Cincinnati	1:00 pm

Peter Brouillet

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cincinnati BENGALS

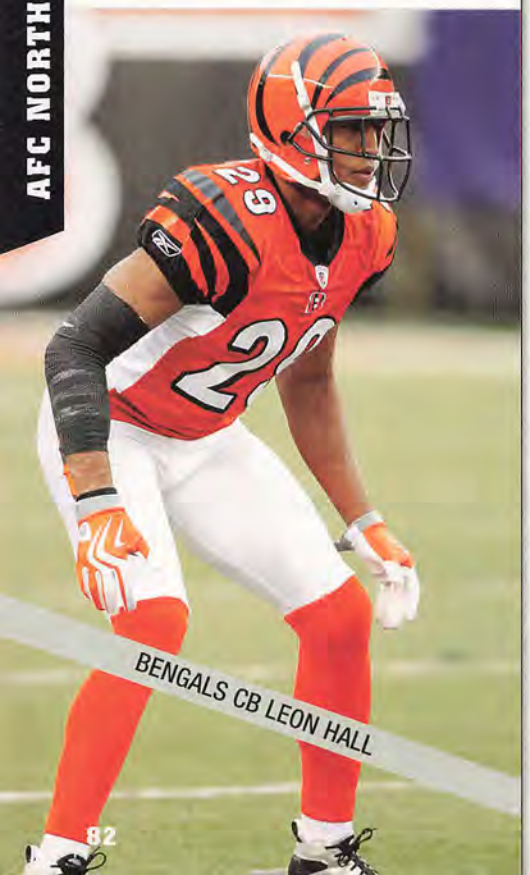
3 AFC NORTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

PRESIDENT: Mike Brown
SENIOR VP: Pete Brown
VP PLAYER PERSONNEL: Paul Brown
STADIUM: Paul Brown Stadium (65,535)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.bengals.com
TICKETS: 866-621-8383
TRAINING CAMP: Georgetown College (Georgetown, Ky.)

Five-Year Win Trend

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



BENGALS CB LEON HALL

The good news for the Bengals in 2009 was an impressive worst-to-first rise that gave them their second AFC North title under Marvin Lewis. The bad news was a frustrating finish in which they lost four of their final five games, including a home playoff loss to the Jets. Clearly, Cincinnati left plenty of room for improvement — especially on offense — if it is to make consecutive trips to the postseason for just the second time in franchise history.

The Bengals proved in 2009 they can run the ball against any team, but even with a healthy Carson Palmer they struggled moving the chains and scoring points through the air. They will not be able to succeed this season without adding that second dimension to their offense.

COACHES Lewis is entering his eighth season in Cincinnati, and only Jeff Fisher, Andy Reid, Bill Belichick and John Fox have longer tenures with their current teams. But Lewis is in the final year of his contract, and while there are internal matters he must address involving his vision for maintaining a winning culture, he also must make sure the team doesn't take big steps backward this season. Defensive coordinator Mike Zimmer is doing everything he can to show he's a viable head coaching candidate. In two seasons he has turned the defense into one of the league's best units through a fire-and-brimstone coaching style that emphasizes attacking from all points on the field. Bob Bratkowski has been calling the Bengals' offensive plays since 2001 and is under fire locally for the Bengals' lack of passing punch. The skill positions on offense have been upgraded this offseason, so it will be Bratkowski's job to reinstitute balance into what was one of the NFL's most potent offenses just a few seasons ago. **GRADE: B**

QUARTERBACKS Palmer still commands respect from opposing defenses, but his production and consistency have dropped the past couple of seasons as he has come back from injuries. No one is using the elbow injury that cost him most of the 2008 season as an excuse, so the question remains whether Palmer can overcome his mediocre play of '09, when he finished 16th in the league with an 83.6 passer rating. Despite those struggles, Palmer improved his mobility out of the pocket and showed a greater penchant for keeping plays alive with his legs. Palmer also led the offense on eight late-game scoring drives that either gave the Bengals the lead or tied a game. Backup J.T. O'Sullivan has previous starting experience with San Francisco, but there would be a significant fall-off if Palmer went down. Palmer's brother, Jordan, is the No. 3. **GRADE: B-**

RUNNING BACKS Cedric Benson ran with an edge last season, a hard style that became Cincinnati's identity. He earned the team's confidence that he can deliver again, though he did miss two games with a hip injury. If the passing game improves, Benson could become the first Bengal to break 1,500 rushing yards. Bernard Scott and Brian Leonard give the Bengals variations from Benson. Scott, last year's sixth-round pick, is more explosive, while Leonard does whatever it takes on third down. Second-year player Fui Vakapuna gets the first shot at fullback. **GRADE: B+**

RECEIVERS Chad Ochocinco is not a consistent deep threat anymore, but his production should increase following the addition of two players who can help stretch the field. The Bengals acquired Antonio Bryant in free agency and tight end Jermaine Gresham with their first-round draft choice. Defenses dared the Bengals to throw deep last season and they couldn't, but Bryant and Gresham could change that. Andre Caldwell was the team's second-leading receiver with 51 receptions last season, and his anemic 8.5-yard average showed how much the downfield passing game struggled. The Bengals drafted two other players, Jordan Shipley from Texas and Dezmon Briscoe from Kansas, and signed former Jaguar Matt Jones to boost the passing game. Caldwell and 2008 second-round pick Jerome Simpson will have to step up their play if they want to stick around. **GRADE: C+**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The best offseason move might have been the re-signing of right guard Bobbie Williams, whose return brings back intact a unit that played better than expected last season, particularly in the running game. The Bengals were ninth in the league in rushing offense and averaged 4.1 yards per carry. The line will be asked to pass-protect longer this year as the team tries to resurrect its vertical passing game. Andrew Whitworth quietly has turned into a stalwart at left tackle after shuffling between guard and tackle his first three seasons. That leaves Andre Smith to assert himself at right tackle. Last year's No. 1 draft choice had a redshirt season after a contract holdout in training camp was followed by injuries that limited him to spot duty in six games. Center Kyle Cook has the physical strength and attitude to win more

Hall, Benson: Ric Fogel

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Sorry, Buddy One pick after the Bengals selected wide receiver Jordan Shipley in the third round, Cleveland chose quarterback Colt McCoy. Shipley and McCoy were roommates at Texas. Informed by a reporter shortly after being chosen by Cincinnati that he would now have to hate McCoy because of their new respective employers, Shipley laughed and said, "That might take a little while, but I'll work on that."

Big Marks Ahead Chad Ochocinco needs just 48 receiving yards to become the 33rd player in NFL history to surpass 10,000 yards. He has topped 1,000 yards in seven of his nine seasons and owns seven club receiving records. He needs two more touchdown catches to pass Carl Pickens (63) for the club record.

Looking for Two The Bengals have reached the postseason nine times in their 42-year history, but only once have they done so in back-to-back seasons (1981-82).

Historically Stingy Last season marked just the second time in franchise history that a Cincinnati defense finished in the top 10 against the pass (sixth), the run (seventh) and in total defense (fourth). Cincinnati also finished sixth in points allowed.

2009 STATS

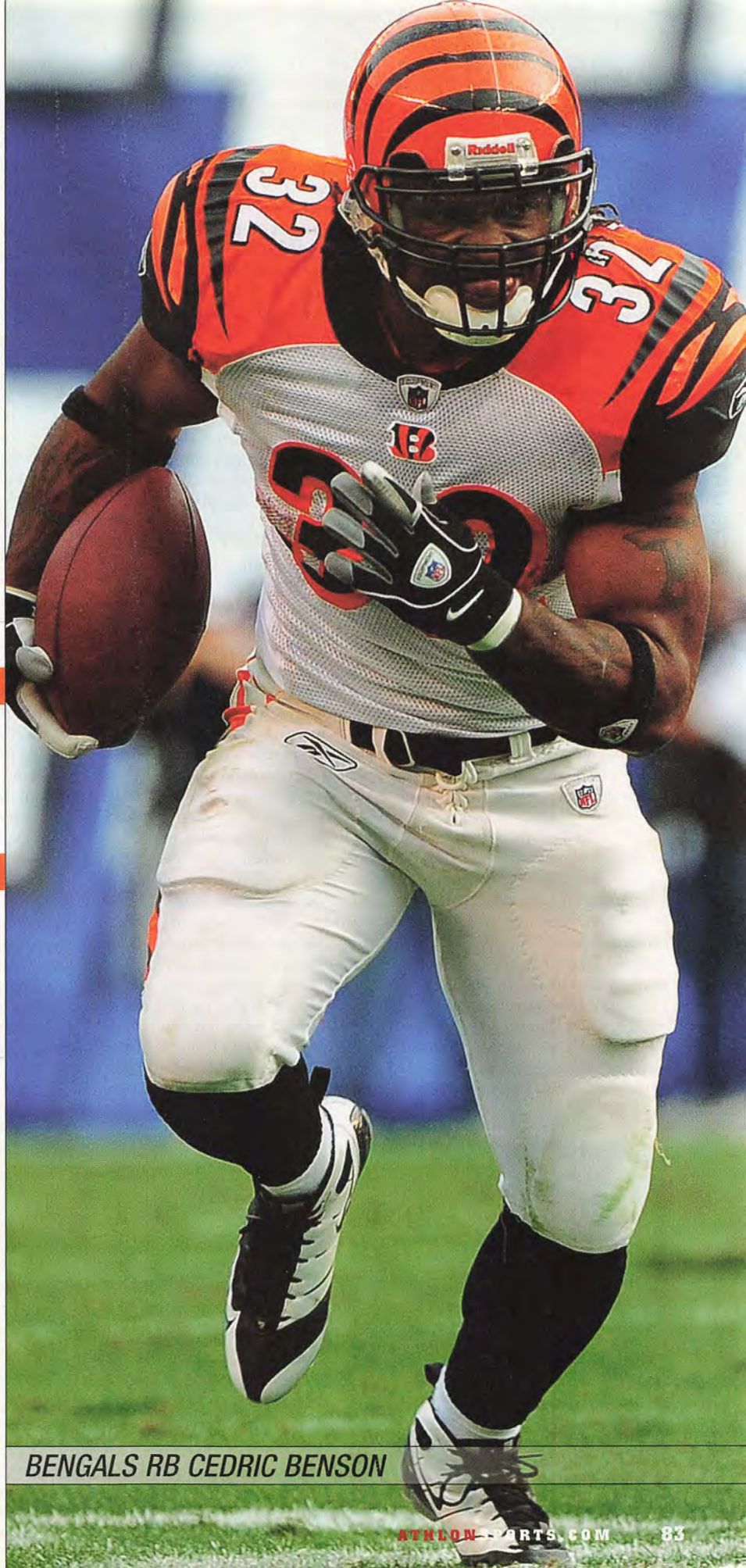
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	309.1	24	12
Rushing	128.5	9	6
Passing	180.6	26	12
Scoring	19.1	22	11
Punt Returns	11.9	2	1
Kick Returns	21.9	T21	12
Red Zone TD %	50.0	T18	9

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	301.4	4	3
Rushing	98.3	7	3
Passing	203.1	6	4
Scoring	18.2	6	4
Interceptions	19	T9	4
Sacks	34	T16	T7
Turnover Differential	0	18	10

SCOUTING THE BENGALS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP CINCINNATI

"Carson Palmer has lost some zip on his throws, but he should bounce back now that they've got Antonio Bryant to take the pressure off Chad Ochocinco. … They wore out Cedric Benson last year. When he's fresh, he's a hard-nosed, downhill runner who runs through arm tackles. … I really like what they did in the draft with Jermaine Gresham. They were pretty much desperate for a tight end, and this guy, if he's healthy, could be damn good. … We'll see if Andre Smith can be a No. 1 pick. … Defensively, they're solid. Their defensive line, at the beginning of the year they were playing at a high level; they just got some injuries. … Johnathan Joseph and Leon Hall are legit cornerbacks, young guys who can really run and cover. I respect those guys. … I don't know if they'll be AFC North champs again, but they should contend."



BENGALS RB CEDRIC BENSON

than his share of battles against the division's tough nosetackles. Nate Livings should be a greater presence at left guard if he can stay healthy. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Right end Antwan Odom had eight sacks through the first six games before suffering an Achilles tendon tear last season. Suddenly, the team's best pass-rusher was on the shelf. The outside pass rush held up pretty well as Jonathan Fanene stepped into Odom's spot, giving Frostee Rucker and Michael Johnson more time as backups. The Bengals improved upon their ability to get to the quarterback without having to blitz, but the consistency of that pressure waned down the stretch. Odom is expected to be back in time for training camp, and the Bengals used their second-round draft pick on Florida end Carlos Dunlap to continue adding to their depth and versatility. Veteran left end Robert Geathers was the leading tackler among the linemen but will be pushed this season. Tackles Domata Peko and Tank Johnson return as the starters inside, with Pat Sims also in the rotation. All are solid, above-average players, but the Bengals lack a dominating presence in the middle of the line. Zimmer is seeking more quarterback pressure up the middle. Sims, in his third season, has the talent to fill that void, but look for Zimmer to use several ends inside as well as he seeks different matchups to achieve his goals. **GRADE: B**

LINEBACKERS This is a quality group that is filled with youth just entering its prime. The lone exception to the youth movement is middle linebacker Dhani Jones, who has led the team in tackles the last two seasons. Jones is entering his 11th season but hasn't shown any signs of slowing down. He's adept at making all of the defensive calls and getting everyone in their required spots. Strong-side linebacker Rey Maualuga is coming off a fractured ankle that cost him a chance to play in the playoffs. He is still working on his pass-coverage skills but plays with explosive aggression. Weak-side linebacker Keith Rivers needs to make more impact plays. The strength of this unit is its depth. There is little drop-off when backups Brandon Johnson and Rashad Jeanty are in the lineup. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The defensive success begins with the ability of cornerback duo Leon Hall and Johnathan Joseph to play aggressive man-to-man coverage. Everything Zimmer wants to do in terms of putting pressure on the quarterback requires the corners to handle those one-on-one assignments. They each had six interceptions and combined to force four fumbles. They also have short-term memories that allow them to get beat on occasion but move on to the next play. Both are also good run supporters. The corner group is deep. David Jones gives the Bengals another big body (6'0", 196) to play on the outside, while Morgan Trent had an impressive rookie season playing the nickel. He was utilized frequently in blitz packages. Third-round pick Brandon Ghee has excellent speed but needs to work on his technique. Free safety Chris Crocker's importance to the secondary was evident late last season when he missed time with an ankle injury and the defense started to slip. Chinedum Ndukwe led the secondary in tackles after taking over for strong safety Roy Williams (forearm injury). Ndukwe has more range than Williams and could win the starting spot outright. The Bengals bolstered their depth at safety by signing Gibril Wilson in early May. **GRADE: B+**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Antonio Bryant	WR	Tampa Bay	Laveranues Coles	WR	Free agent
Matt Jones	WR	None	J.P. Foschi	TE	Free agent
Pacman Jones	CB	None	Shayne Graham	K	Free agent
Mike Nugent	K	Arizona	Jeremi Johnson	FB	Free agent
Dave Rayner	K	None	Larry Johnson	RB	Washington
Gibril Wilson	S	Miami	Shaun Smith	DT	Kansas City

Bryant should be a major upgrade over Coles, who was disappointing in his one season in Cincinnati. There have been questions regarding Bryant's ability to be a good teammate, but the Bengals' locker room has become a tight group that does a good job policing such issues. Allowing Graham to leave means the Bengals must replace their all-time leader in field goal accuracy, but in the playoffs Graham missed two field goals from 35 yards and in, effectively sealing his fate. The Bengals did most of their work re-signing their own free agents.

SPECIALISTS After seven seasons with Shayne Graham handling the kicking duties, the Bengals allowed him to test free agency. Dave Rayner, who kicked with the Bengals for two games in 2008, and Mike Nugent, who kicked for Tampa Bay and Arizona last season, will compete for the job. Punter Kevin Huber has a knack for getting the ball inside the 20 (24 times vs. 10 touchbacks) but needs better consistency with his hang time. Punt returner Quan Cosby greatly improved what had been a weak spot for several seasons. He has a quick burst and makes good decisions. Pacman Jones, if he makes the team, will push Cosby for that spot. Scott was impressive on kickoff returns, averaging 31.5 yards. **GRADE: B**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Bengals didn't make a huge splash with any of their offseason moves — they rarely do — but they should reap benefits from the ones they made. Bryant and Gresham figure to lift the passing game, thus allowing the offense to pick up a stout defense now and then. Amazingly, Cincinnati won the division despite scoring as many as 24 points in just three games. It will be difficult for the Bengals to duplicate last season's 10–6 record and their 6–0 mark in the AFC North, especially against a first-place schedule. But greater offensive balance and a more opportunistic defense — the Bengals produced just 25 turnovers a year ago — should keep them in the playoff hunt.

Larry Smith

CINCINNATI IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Jermaine Gresham	TE	6-5	261	Oklahoma
2. Carlos Dunlap	DE	6-6	277	Florida
3. Jordan Shipley	WR	6-0	193	Texas
3. Brandon Ghee	CB	6-0	192	Wake Forest
4. Geno Atkins	DT	6-1	293	Georgia
4. Roddrick Muckelroy	LB	6-2	246	Texas
5. Otis Hudson	G	6-5	320	Eastern Illinois
6. Dezmon Briscoe	WR	6-2	207	Kansas
7. Reggie Stephens	C	6-3	314	Iowa State

The Bengals wanted to add weapons to an anemic passing offense and did just that with the picks of Gresham, Shipley and Briscoe. Gresham will step right in and start, giving Carson Palmer a pass-catching tight end whom defenses will have to respect. Shipley will get a shot at playing in the slot as well as in the return game. Briscoe could turn into the surprise pick of the draft. He's a tall target who could give the Bengals another down-field deep threat they were missing last season after the injury and subsequent death of Chris Henry. Dunlap and Ghee will be used in reserve roles but should be able to contribute right away in situational defenses.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 O'Sullivan, J.T.	QB	6-2	230	7	California-Davis	FA-SF-09	D6-NO-02
9 Palmer, Carson	QB	6-5	235	7	USC	D1-03	D1-Cin-03
5 Palmer, Jordan	QB	6-5	235	2	UTEP	FA-08	D6-Was-07
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32 Benson, Cedric	RB	5-11	225	5	Texas	FA-08	D1-Chi-05
39 Johnson, James	RB	5-11	205	1	Kansas State	FA-08	FA-Cin-08
40 Leonard, Brian	RB	6-1	230	3	Rutgers	T-StL-09	D2-StL-07
30 Peerman, Cedric	RB	5-9	210	1	Virginia	W-Det-10	D6-Bal-09
28 Scott, Bernard	RB	5-10	200	1	Abilene Christian	D6b-09	D6b-Cin-09
37 Vakapuna, Fui	FB	6-0	260	1	BYU	PS-Ari-09	D7a-Cin-09
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
Brown, Freddie	WR	6-4	210	1	Utah	D7-Cin-09	D7c-Cin-09
81 Bryant, Antonio	WR	6-1	205	7	Pittsburgh	FA-TB-10	D2-Dal-02
87 Caldwell, Andre	WR	6-0	200	2	Florida	D3b-08	D3b-Cin-08
86 Coats, Daniel	TE	6-3	264	3	BYU	FA-07	FA-Cin-07
80 Coffman, Chase	TE	6-6	257	1	Missouri	D3b-09	D3b-Cin-09
12 Cosby, Quan	WR	5-9	196	1	Texas	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
16 Davis, Chris	WR	5-10	181	2	Florida State	FA-10	D4-Ten-07
49 Hill, Darius	TE	6-7	245	1	Ball State	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
18 Jones, Matt	WR	6-6	218	4	Arkansas	FA-10	D1-Jac-05
85 Ochocinco, Chad	WR	6-1	192	9	Oregon State	D2-01	D2-Cin-01
14 Purify, Maurice	WR	6-3	226	1	Nebraska	FA-08	FA-Cin-08
89 Simpson, Jerome	WR	6-2	195	2	Coastal Carolina	D2-08	D2-Cin-08
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
73 Collins, Anthony	T	6-5	315	2	Kansas	D4-08	D4-Cin-08
64 Cook, Kyle	C	6-3	312	2	Michigan State	FA-07	FA-Min-07
62 Livings, Nate	G	6-5	330	2	LSU	FA-06	FA-Cin-06
50 Luigs, Jonathan	C	6-4	315	1	Arkansas	D4-09	D4-Cin-09
66 Mathis, Evan	G	6-5	295	5	Alabama	FA-08	D3-Car-05
74 Roland, Dennis	T	6-9	325	2	Georgia	FA-08	FA-Dal-06
65 Santucci, Dan	C	6-4	304	3	Notre Dame	PS-Ind-07	D7-Cin-07
70 Shirley, Jason	G	6-5	338	2	Fresno State	D5-08	D5-Cin-08
71 Smith, Andre	T	6-4	335	1	Alabama	D1-09	D1-Cin-09
77 Whitworth, Andrew	T	6-7	335	4	LSU	D2-06	D2-Cin-06
63 Williams, Bobbie	G	6-4	345	10	Arkansas	FA-Phi-04	D2-Phi-00
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
68 Fanene, Jonathan	DE	6-4	292	5	Utah	D7-05	D7-Cin-05
91 Geathers, Robert	DE	6-3	280	6	Georgia	D4b-04	D4b-Cin-04
95 Harris, Orien	DT	6-3	300	2	Miami	FA-09	D4-Pit-06
93 Johnson, Michael	DE	6-7	260	1	Georgia Tech	D3a-09	D3a-Cin-09
99 Johnson, Tank	DT	6-3	305	6	Washington	FA-Dal-09	D2-Chi-04
69 McDonald, Clinton	DT	6-2	290	1	Memphis	D7b-09	D7b-Cin-09
98 Odom, Antwan	DE	6-5	280	6	Alabama	FA-Ten-08	D2-Ten-04
94 Peko, Domata	DT	6-3	318	4	Michigan State	D4-06	D4-Cin-06
92 Rucker, Frostee	DE	6-3	285	4	USC	D3-06	D3-Cin-06
90 Sims, Pat	DT	6-2	325	2	Auburn	D3a-08	D3a-Cin-08
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
52 Hodge, Abdul	LB	6-0	240	4	Iowa	FA-08	D3-GB-06
53 Jeanty, Rashad	LB	6-2	247	4	Central Florida	FA-06	FA-Cin-06
59 Johnson, Brandon	LB	6-5	243	4	Louisville	FA-08	D5-Ari-06
57 Jones, Dhani	LB	6-1	240	10	Michigan	FA-07	D6-NYG-00
58 Maualuga, Rey	LB	6-2	255	1	USC	D2-09	D2-Cin-09
55 Rivers, Keith	LB	6-2	240	2	USC	D1-08	D1-Cin-08
51 Skuta, Dan	LB	6-2	251	1	Grand Valley State	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
42 Crocker, Chris	S	5-11	200	7	Marshall	FA-08	D3-Cle-03
29 Hall, Leon	CB	5-11	199	3	Michigan	D1-07	D1-Cin-07
34 Hebert, Kyries	S	6-3	220	2	UL Lafayette	FA-08	FA-Min-02
20 Jones, David	CB	6-0	196	3	Wingate	W-NO-07	D5-NO-07
Jones, Pacman	CB	5-10	185	4	West Virginia	FA-10	D1-Ten-05
22 Joseph, Johnathan	CB	5-11	193	4	South Carolina	D1-06	D1-Cin-06
21 Mickens, Mike	CB	6-1	190	1	Cincinnati	FA-09	D7-Dal-09
44 Murray, Rico	S	5-11	202	1	Kent State	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
41 Ndukwe, Chinedum	S	6-2	224	3	Notre Dame	D7b-07	D7b-Cin-07
43 Nelson, Tom	S	5-11	203	1	Illinois State	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
24 Smith, Antonio	CB	5-9	190	2	Ohio State	FA-09	FA-Ind-07
25 Trent, Morgan	CB	6-1	195	1	Michigan	D6a-09	D6a-Cin-09
31 Williams, Roy	S	6-0	222	8	Oklahoma	FA-09	D1-Dal-02
Wilson, Gibril	S	6-0	205	6	Tennessee	FA-Mia-10	D5-NYG-04
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
46 Harris, Clark	LS	6-5	257	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
10 Huber, Kevin	P	6-1	210	1	Cincinnati	D5-09	D5-Cin-09
2 Nugent, Mike	K	5-10	190	5	Ohio State	FA-10	D2-NYJ-05
3 Rayner, Dave	K	6-2	210	4	Michigan State	FA-10	D6-Ind-05

Ric Fogel

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	85	Chad Ochocinco
	11	Jordan Shipley (R)
WR	81	Antonio Bryant
	87	Andre Caldwell
LT	77	Andrew Whitworth
	73	Anthony Collins
LG	62	Nate Livings
	66	Evan Mathis
C	64	Kyle Cook
	50	Jonathan Luigs
RG	63	Bobbie Williams
	66	Evan Mathis
RT	71	Andre Smith
	74	Dennis Roland
TE	84	Jermaine Gresham (R)
	80	Chase Coffman
QB	9	Carson Palmer
	4	J.T. O'Sullivan
FB	37	Fui Vakapuna
RB	32	Cedric Benson
	28	Bernard Scott

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	91	Robert Geathers
	68	Jonathan Fanene
DT	94	Domata Peko
	95	Orien Harris
DT	99	Tank Johnson
	90	Pat Sims
DE	98	Antwan Odom
	92	Frostee Rucker
SLB	58	Rey Maualuga
	53	Rashad Jeanty
WLB	57	Dhani Jones
	52	Abdul Hodge
WLB	55	Keith Rivers
	59	Brandon Johnson
CB	29	Leon Hall
	25	Morgan Trent
CB	22	Johnathan Joseph
	20	David Jones
SS	31	Roy Williams
	41	Chinedum Ndukwe
FS	42	Chris Crocker
		Gibril Wilson

SPECIAL TEAMS

K	2	Mike Nugent
KR	28	Bernard Scott
P	10	Kevin Huber
PR	12	Quan Cosby

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Marvin Lewis
Offensive Coordinator: Bob Bratkowski
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Zimmer
Special Teams: Darrin Simmons
Quarterbacks: Ken Zampese
Running Backs: Jim Anderson
Wide Receivers: Mike Sheppard
Tight Ends: Jonathan Hayes
Asst. Head Coach/Off. Line: Paul Alexander
Defensive Line: Jay Hayes
Offensive Quality Control: Kyle Caskey
Linebackers: Jeff FitzGerald
Asst. Special Teams/Asst. Linebackers: Paul Guenther
Defensive Backs: Kevin Coyle
Asst. Defensive Backs: Louie Cioffi
Strength and Conditioning: Chip Morton
Assistant Strength and Conditioning: Jeff Friday

FANTASY FLASH

Limited by an offensive attack that emphasized the run over the pass, **Carson Palmer** had only one 300-yard passing game last year. He had five such games in 2007 (his previous full season). *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(10–6)*

Sept. 13	Denver		L	7–12
Sept. 20	at Green Bay		W	31–24
Sept. 27	Pittsburgh		W	23–20
Oct. 4	at Cleveland	(ot)	W	23–20
Oct. 11	at Baltimore		W	17–14
Oct. 18	Houston		L	17–28
Oct. 25	Chicago		W	45–10
Nov. 8	Baltimore		W	17– 7
Nov. 15	at Pittsburgh		W	18–12
Nov. 22	at Oakland		L	17–20
Nov. 29	Cleveland		W	16– 7
Dec. 6	Detroit		W	23–13
Dec. 13	at Minnesota		L	10–30
Dec. 20	at San Diego		L	24–27
Dec. 27	Kansas City		W	17–10
Jan. 3	at N.Y. Jets		L	0–37
Postseason				
Jan. 9	N.Y. Jets		L	14–24

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at New England	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Baltimore	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Week 6	BYE	
Oct. 24	at Atlanta	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	Miami	1:00 pm
Nov. 8	Pittsburgh	8:30 pm
Nov. 14	at Indianapolis	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Nov. 25	at N.Y. Jets	8:20 pm
Dec. 5	New Orleans	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	San Diego	8:20 pm
Jan. 2	at Baltimore	1:00 pm

cleveland BROWNS

4 AFC NORTH FORECAST

CLEVELAND

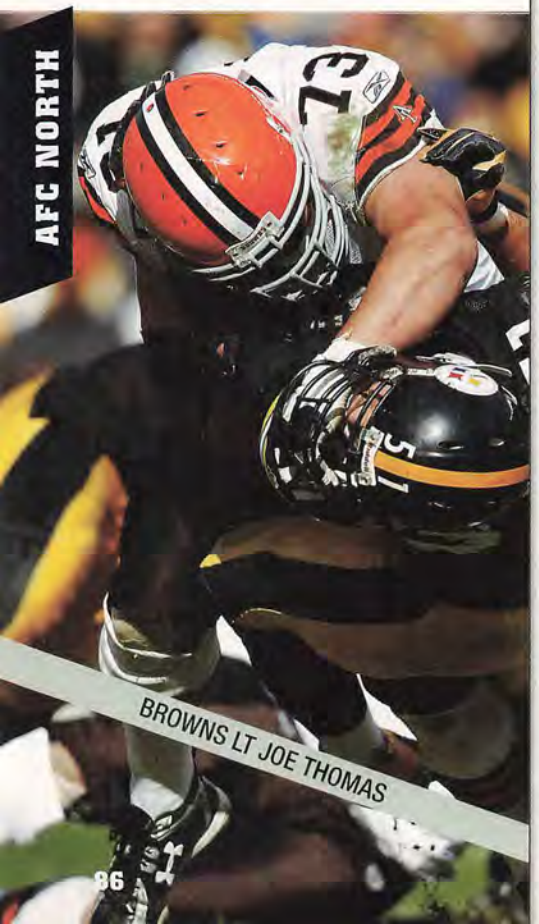
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Randy Lerner
PRESIDENT: Mike Holmgren
GENERAL MANAGER: Tom Heckert
STADIUM: Cleveland Browns Stadium (73,200)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.clevelandbrowns.com
TICKETS: 888-891-1999
TRAINING CAMP: Browns Complex (Berea, Ohio)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	6
2006	4
2007	10
2008	4
2009	5

AFC NORTH



BROWNS LT JOE THOMAS

The Browns would like the world to believe that the team that starts the 2010 season is the one that ended the 2009 slate. The team that won four in a row, finished strong, ran the ball, played defense and took some steps to erase a very poor start. That start, though, was 1–11, and it featured some of the worst football played in Cleveland since the team returned in 1999 — which is saying a lot. The Browns were embarrassed in some games and fell over themselves in others. They played listless, lifeless football. Until they somehow found a way to win their final four games.

Those games saved a coach's job but did not prevent significant front office and on-the-field changes. For the fifth time since their rebirth, the Browns are trying to reinvent themselves, now with Mike Holmgren taking over as team president and Tom Heckert as general manager. The hope is that more firm leadership at the top will translate to better performance on the field. It can't be much worse.

COACHES Eric Mangini's future was hanging by the slimmest of threads until he and his team found ways to beat Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Oakland and Jacksonville to end the season. None of those teams made the playoffs, and three of them lost nine or more games. No matter. Mangini was retained even though the Browns finished the season 5–11 and dead last in team offense and second-to-last in team defense. The biggest change for Mangini will be a reduced role. A year ago, he served as general czar of football. Though he lacked the title, he took charge of all decisions related to personnel, the building and almost anything Browns. But the addition of Holmgren has added a new dynamic. Holmgren now runs the team, and he quickly brought in Heckert from Philadelphia to be GM and Gil Haskell to be his special assistant. Holmgren and Heckert decide on personnel, and Mangini is free to do one thing: Coach the team. The hope is that reduced responsibility, stated or not, helps the coach. Brian Daboll returns as offensive coordinator, and it will be interesting to see how much Holmgren's West Coast offense is integrated into Daboll's scheme. Holmgren is a staunch West Coast guy, and one of the first things he assigned Haskell was to work with Daboll. Defensive coordinator Rob Ryan also returns. Ryan will continue to run his aggressive attack scheme, though he will need better play from his secondary to make it work. **GRADE: C**

QUARTERBACKS The Browns overhauled the position, and there are two possible explanations: Holmgren did not like Brady Quinn and Derek Anderson at all, or Mangini did not like the two guys he coached last season. Either way, the Browns start over. Again. Quinn and Anderson were miserable in 2009 and both are now gone. Enter Jake Delhomme, a 35-year-old trying to save his career; Seneca Wallace, a career backup coached by Holmgren in Seattle; and Colt McCoy, a talented third-round draft choice who is not expected to play anytime soon. Delhomme must show he's no longer rattled by a poor playoff performance following the 2008 season that carried over to an awful '09 season. Wallace has never been a full-time starter. Even Holmgren admits it didn't sound too good when the reality of the position — an aging veteran and a career backup — was posed to him, but he believes the Browns will benefit from Delhomme's experience and that Wallace is better than a typical backup. That's the way the Browns will go into 2010. **GRADE: C-**

RUNNING BACKS Lawrence Vickers is as good a fullback as there is in the league. His physical lead blocking has improved every season, and he has the ability to run the ball and catch it and do something with it out of the backfield as well. Vickers could benefit greatly if the Browns emphasize the West Coast system more. As for running backs … the Browns have a great fullback. Gone is Jamal Lewis, who never really took to Mangini's system and physical practices. Jerome Harrison returns as the feature back after gaining 862 yards. Harrison opened many eyes with a stunning 286-yard game against Kansas City, a Browns record. But he has never been a full-time, feature back, and his size (5'9", 205) indicates he might not be able to take the pounding a 250-carry season brings. The Browns will use Chris Jennings, James Davis, Peyton Hillis or second-round pick Montario Hardesty as the second back. They bring ability, but nothing proven. The Browns have one ace in the hole: Using Josh Cribbs in the Wildcat. Even though teams know what's coming when Cribbs lines up, he still makes plays. **GRADE: D+**

RECEIVERS Lost in the hoopla over the Browns' moves at quarterback is the reality that the new guys don't exactly have a legitimate posse of receivers to throw to. The team's leading receiver, Mohamed Massaquoi, caught just 34 passes. Brian Robiskie, a second-year player like Massaquoi, could be the other starter, and he had just seven catches. Mike Furrey and Chansi Stuckey also play. This is a position with a lot of question marks and without any true speed to

Thomas: Joe Robbins/Getty Images; Cribbs: Ric Fogel

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Revolving QBs Barring injury or miracle, Jake Delhomme will be the Browns' opening day starter. Last season it was Brady Quinn. The year before, Derek Anderson. After this opener, the Browns will have used nine different opening day quarterbacks in 11 seasons: Ty Detmer, Tim Couch, Kelly Holcomb, Jeff Garcia, Trent Dilfer, Charlie Frye, Anderson, Quinn and Delhomme.

Happy Birthday, Dear Josh Cribbs spent part of his offseason asking for a new contract (which he got). He spent another part being seen at many events, including courtside at Cleveland Cavaliers games. The real sign that Cribbs has arrived was when he took part in Playboy's celebrity golf tournament … on his wife's birthday.

Talk About Emerging The final three-game performance by Jerome Harrison was beyond shocking. Harrison ran for 561 yards in those three games, including 286 in a win over Kansas City. Prior to the Chiefs game, Harrison had run for a total of 749 yards in his previous 43 games.

Consistent Struggles How futile have the Browns been since they returned in 1999? Consider: In 11 seasons they have had two winning records, one playoff appearance (a loss), a 59–117 record and a .335 winning percentage.

2009 STATS

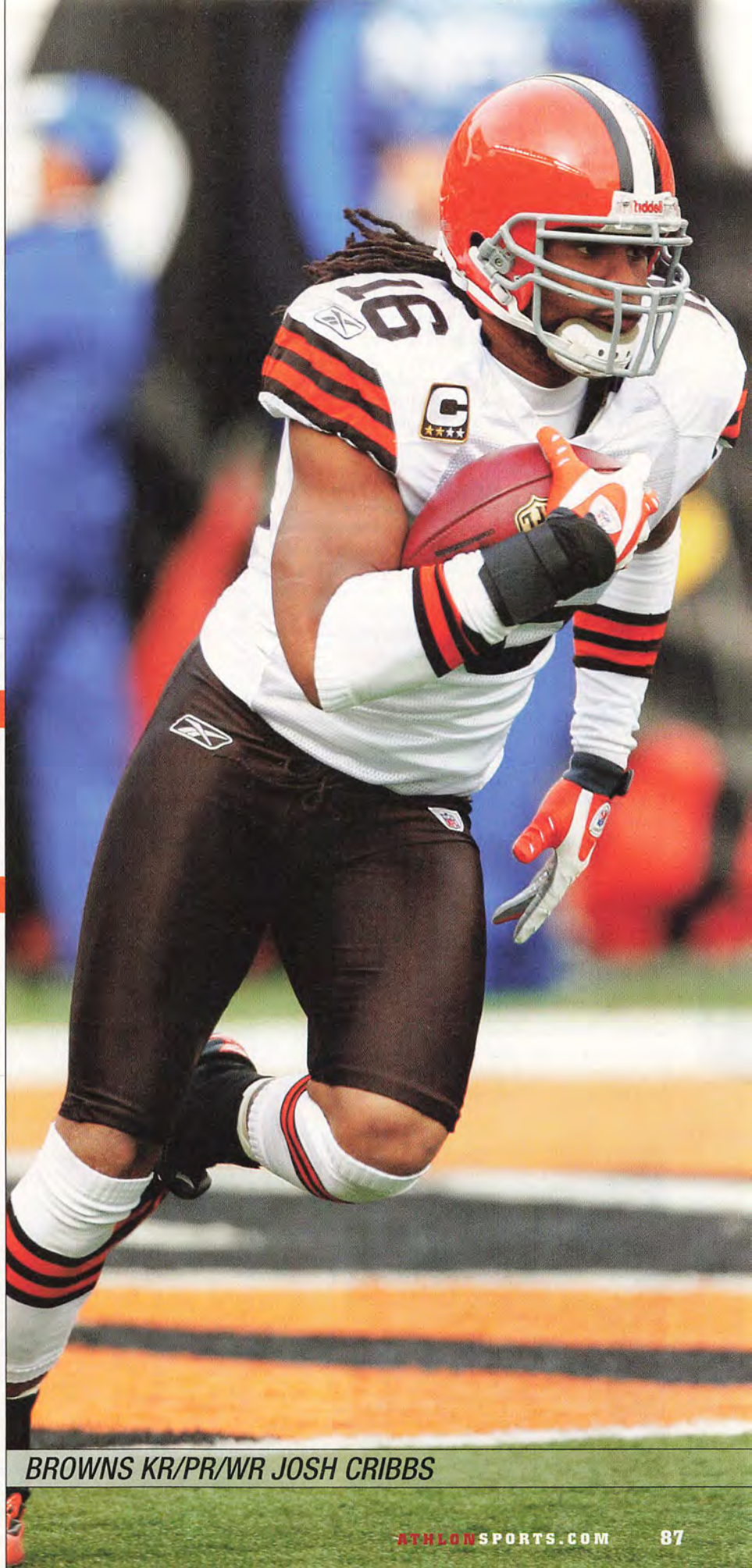
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	260.2	32	16
Rushing	130.4	8	5
Passing	129.8	32	16
Scoring	15.3	29	15
Punt Returns	11.7	3	2
Kick Returns	24.2	7	3
Red Zone TD %	43.6	28	14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	389.3	31	16
Rushing	144.6	28	13
Passing	244.7	29	15
Scoring	23.4	T21	11
Interceptions	10	29	15
Sacks	40	T8	3
Turnover Differential	-12	29	15

SCOUTING THE BROWNS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP CLEVELAND

"You've got to wonder if Jake Delhomme is going to be an interception machine. Changing teams doesn't always change your confidence and feel for the game. … How much will Mike Holmgren influence what the Browns do on offense? He is the most direct link to the Bill Walsh tree in the NFL, and drafting Colt McCoy says a lot. If McCoy is going to be a successful NFL quarterback, it's going to be in a West Coast system. … Joe Thomas is really solid, but I don't think he's an elite tackle. … They really need to upgrade at wide receiver. They're still not there yet on offense. … They're getting better on defense, but I'm still not sold. You can grind out yards on these guys. … Eric Mangini is in a tough spot. He's got an improved roster, but he's in a precarious situation because of Holmgren."



BROWNS KR/PR/WR JOSH CRIBBS

stretch defenses. The Browns did upgrade at tight end by signing Benjamin Watson as a free agent, but Watson left New England and it's tough to recall the last true standout let go by Bill Belichick. Until Delhomme and the receivers show they can play and contribute, the Browns will see a lot of eight-in-the-box defenses. **GRADE: D**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Browns have one of the league's best left sides of the line with Joe Thomas at tackle and Eric Steinbach at guard. Both are strong, hard-working and dependable, and both have the ability to pull, counter and move up front. This is a strength that must be exploited. At center, Alex Mack should be better in his second season. Mack is a good player whose only flaw was being the center selected after the Browns traded the sixth overall pick to the Jets so New York could select Mark Sanchez. The right side of the line is problematic. The Browns will select from a group of guys including Floyd Womack, John St. Clair and Tony Pashos for the two spots there. The line looks very similar to 2009, though — the left side is strong, the right is not. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Browns got some good work out of their 3-4 front last season but traded one guy who didn't really fit when they sent Corey Williams to Detroit. Shaun Rogers returns, but his future is clouded by a lingering weapons possession charge from carrying a loaded gun through airport security. Not wise. That might not matter a lot to the Browns, though, because the coaches like the way Ahtyba Rubin played after Rogers was injured in 2009. Rubin, Kenyon Coleman, Robaire Smith, C.J. Mosley and Brian Schaefering form a unit that can succeed in a 3-4 scheme. **GRADE: C+**

LINEBACKERS The Browns shocked a lot of people in the offseason when they traded former first-round draft pick Kamerion Wimbley to Oakland. Wimbley was a solid player and even better guy who seemed to be a fit for the Browns for years. He was sent to the NFL's Siberia after one year with Mangini. But Mangini likes "his" guys — Matt Roth, David Bowens, Marcus Benard, Jason Trusnik — and felt comfortable with the team's depth. They — along with free agent signee Scott Fujita and Chris Gocong (acquired via trade from Philadelphia) — will compete to start. Fujita should start inside with D'Qwell Jackson, with Bowens and Eric Barton pushing them. Bowens is also a candidate to start on the outside. Roth is a key. His signing in the 2009 season really solidified the defense because Roth is a stout, strong guy who can play the run extremely well. He could be a gem found in an ugly season. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE BACKS This group was pretty woeful last season, even with guys like cornerback Eric Wright and safety Mike Adams playing pretty good football. The Browns made key moves when they traded to acquire cornerback Sheldon Brown from Philadelphia and drafted Joe Haden in the first round. Brown is a legitimate corner who can play opposite Wright and give the Browns a viable tandem. Haden adds to the position's depth and strength. The Browns lacked a tandem a year ago when Brandon McDonald started. These moves also allowed the Browns to strengthen the safety spot in the draft, which they did when they took T.J. Ward in the second round. He should back up Abram Elam. **GRADE: B.**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Sheldon Brown	CB	Philadelphia	Derek Anderson	QB	Arizona
Jake Delhomme	QB	Carolina	Hank Fraley	OL	St. Louis
Scott Fujita	LB	New Orleans	Michael Gaines	TE	Houston
Chris Gocong	LB	Philadelphia	Rex Hadnot	OL	Arizona
Peyton Hillis	RB	Denver	Steve Heiden	TE	Free agent
Tony Pashos	T	San Francisco	Jamal Lewis	RB	Free agent
Seneca Wallace	QB	Seattle	Brodney Pool	S	N.Y. Jets
Benjamin Watson	TE	New England	Brady Quinn	QB	Denver
			Corey Williams	DT	Detroit
			Kamerion Wimbley	LB	Oakland

Mike Holmgren got rid of the two quarterbacks who started last season and brought in two new ones. Quinn, who was a celebrated first-round draft pick in 2007, was sent to Denver for two low draft picks and Hillis, a solid but unspectacular player. It would seem that anything the Browns get from Delhomme will be a bonus. Wallace is a career backup who has the support of Holmgren, which is interesting because Eric Mangini coaches the team. Fujita and Brown provide some foundation for a defense that needs a lot of help.

SPECIALISTS If only the rest of the team were as good as the special teams unit, which is among the best in the league. Mangini's importing of such players as Trusnik, Blake Costanzo and Ray Ventrone made the Browns very potent covering and returning kicks. With Cribbs, the Browns have perhaps the best special teams player in the league. He is a constant threat on returns and covers kicks superbly. Kicker Phil Dawson and punter Dave Zastudil are among the NFL's more dependable players at their positions. **GRADE: A**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Browns' strong finish in 2009 does not erase the bad start, and the Browns were a very, very bad team in 2009. They have responded to a dismal season by reshuffling their quarterbacks and adding no significant impact players at any skill position. The Browns will be better this season because it would be next to impossible to be worse. But they are a long way from being good. This season is about rebuilding with quantity rather than quality. It is about intangibles like playing harder and smarter and showing improvement. It is not about double-digit wins or a playoff push.

CLEVELAND IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Joe Haden	CB	5-11	193	Florida
2. T.J. Ward	S	5-10	211	Oregon
2. Montario Hardesty	RB	6-0	225	Tennessee
3. Colt McCoy	QB	6-1	216	Texas
3. Shawn Lauvao	G	6-2	315	Arizona State
5. Larry Asante	S	6-0	212	Nebraska
6. Carlton Mitchell	WR	6-3	215	South Florida
6. Clifton Geathers	DE	6-7	299	South Carolina

The most exciting and interesting pick from this draft should not see the field in 2010. The Browns do not want to play McCoy, whom they took in the third round. President Mike Holmgren says a young quarterback can be "scarred" if he's forced in too soon, and Browns fans have seen that happen. McCoy would benefit from sitting and learning, a la Carson Palmer, Aaron Rodgers and Philip Rivers. The bulk of the Browns' effort went toward bolstering a weak secondary. Haden will provide some long-needed depth this season, and Ward is a big hitter who plays a physical safety. Both will have a good opportunity to start. Lauvao could surprise. He's a strong blocker at a position of need.

Layne Murdoch

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Delhomme, Jake	QB	6-2	215	11	UL Lafayette	FA-Car-10	FA-NO-97
5 Ratliff, Brett	QB	6-4	224	2	Utah	T-NYJ-09	FA-NYJ-07
Wallace, Seneca	QB	5-11	205	7	Iowa State	T-Sea-10	D4a-Sea-03

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
29 Brown, Thomas	RB	5-8	203	2	Georgia	FA-08	D6-Atl-08
44 Collins, Jed	RB	6-1	249	1	Washington State	FA-09	FA-Phi-08
28 Davis, James	RB	5-11	218	1	Clemson	D6c-09	D6c-Cle-09
35 Harrison, Jerome	RB	5-9	205	4	Washington State	D5a-06	D5a-Cle-06
28 Hillis, Peyton	RB	6-1	240	2	Arkansas	T-Den-10	D7b-Den-08
34 Jennings, Chris	RB	5-10	218	1	Arizona	FA-09	FA-Cle-09
47 Vickers, Lawrence	FB	6-0	250	4	Colorado	D6a-06	D6a-Cle-06

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
85 Allen, Jake	WR	6-4	196	1	Mississippi College	W-GB-09	FA-GB-08
16 Cribbs, Josh	WR	6-1	215	5	Kent State	FA-05	FA-Cle-05
83 Estandia, Greg	TE	6-8	266	3	UNLV	W-Jac-09	FA-Cin-06
87 Furrey, Mike	WR	6-0	195	7	Northern Iowa	FA-09	FA-Ind-00
11 Massaquoi, Mohamed	WR	6-2	207	1	Georgia	D2b-09	D2b-Cle-09
89 Moore, Evan	TE	6-6	247	2	Stanford	FA-09	FA-NO-08
80 Robiskie, Brian	WR	6-3	209	1	Ohio State	D2a-09	D2a-Cle-09
84 Royal, Robert	TE	6-4	257	8	LSU	FA-09	D5-Was-02
12 Steptoe, Syndric	WR	5-9	200	2	Arizona	D7b-07	D7b-Cle-07
88 Stuckey, Chansi	WR	6-0	196	3	Clemson	T-NYJ-09	D7-NYJ-07
82 Watson, Benjamin	TE	6-3	255	6	Georgia	FA-NE-10	D1b-NE-04

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
79 Capizzi, Jason	OL	6-9	330	1	Indiana (PA)	FA-09	FA-Pit-07
Ghiacuic, Eric	C	6-5	305	5	Central Michigan	FA-SD-10	D4-Cin-05
55 Mack, Alex	C	6-4	311	1	California	D1-09	D1-Cle-09
75 Murray, Pat	OL	6-3	316	2	Truman State	FA-09	FA-GB-07
79 Pashos, Tony	T	6-6	326	7	Illinois	FA-SF-10	D5-Bal-03
78 St. Clair, John	T	6-6	320	10	Virginia	FA-Chi-09	D3-StL-00
65 Steinbach, Eric	G	6-6	295	7	Iowa	FA-Cin-07	D2-Cin-03
73 Thomas, Joe	T	6-6	312	3	Wisconsin	D1a-07	D1a-Cle-07
77 Womack, Floyd	G	6-4	328	9	Mississippi State	FA-Sea-09	D4-Sea-01
68 Yates, Billy	OL	6-2	305	6	Texas A&M	FA-09	FA-Mia-03

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Coleman, Kenyon	DE	6-5	295	8	UCLA	T-NYJ-09	D5-Oak-02
60 Grennan, Keith	DL	6-4	298	2	Eastern Washington	FA-09	FA-SD-07
61 Lewis, Jonathan	DL	6-0	305	3	Virginia Tech	FA-09	D6-Ari-06
69 Mosley, C.J.	DE	6-3	305	5	Missouri	FA-NYJ-09	D6-Min-05
67 Robinson, Derreck	DL	6-4	295	4	Iowa	FA-09	FA-SD-05
92 Rogers, Shaun	NT	6-4	350	9	Texas	T-Det-08	D2-Det-01
71 Rubin, Ahtyba	NT	6-2	330	2	Iowa State	D6a-08	D6a-Cle-08
91 Schaefering, Brian	DE	6-4	295	1	Lindenwood	FA-09	FA-Cle-08
98 Smith, Robaire	DE	6-5	310	10	Michigan State	FA-Ten-07	D6-Ten-00

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Barton, Eric	LB	6-3	245	11	Maryland	FA-NYJ-09	D5-Oak-99
58 Benard, Marcus	LB	6-2	256	1	Jackson State	FA-09	FA-Cle-09
96 Bowens, David	LB	6-3	265	11	Western Illinois	FA-NYJ-09	D5-Den-99
59 Brown, Titus	LB	6-3	250	1	Mississippi State	FA-08	FA-Mia-08
54 Costanzo, Blake	LB	6-1	235	3	Lafayette	W-Buf-09	FA-NYJ-06
99 Fujita, Scott	LB	6-5	250	8	California	FA-NO-10	D5-KC-02
51 Gocong, Chris	LB	6-2	263	4	Cal Poly	T-Phi-10	D3-Phi-06
52 Jackson, D'Qwell	LB	6-0	240	4	Maryland	D2-06	D2-Cle-06
56 Maiava, Kaluka	LB	6-0	229	1	USC	D4-09	D4-Cle-09
53 Roth, Matt	LB	6-4	275	5	Iowa	W-Mia-09	D2-Mia-05
93 Trusnik, Jason	LB	6-4	250	3	Ohio Northern	T-NYJ-09	FA-NYJ-07
57 Veikune, David	LB	6-2	257	1	Hawaii	D2c-09	D2c-Cle-09

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20 Adams, Mike	S	5-11	200	6	Delaware	FA-SF-07	FA-SF-04
Brown, Sheldon	CB	5-10	200	8	South Carolina	T-Phi-10	D2b-Phi-02
26 Elam, Abram	S	6-0	207	4	Kent State	T-NYJ-09	FA-Mia-05
25 Francies, Coye	DB	6-0	185	1	San Jose State	D6b-09	D6b-Cle-09
30 Lawson, Gerard	DB	5-10	195	2	Oregon State	FA-08	FA-Cle-08
22 McDonald, Brandon	CB	5-10	185	3	Memphis	D5-07	D5-Cle-07
38 Robinson, Ramzee	DB	5-10	190	3	Alabama	W-Phi-09	D7-Det-07
Smith, DeAngelo	DB	5-11	198	1	Cincinnati	W-Det-10	D5-Dal-09
27 Sorensen, Nick	S	6-3	210	9	Virginia Tech	FA-07	FA-Mia-01
41 Ventrone, Ray	DB	5-10	200	4	Villanova	FA-09	FA-NE-05
24 Wright, Eric	CB	5-10	190	3	UNLV	D2-07	D2-Cle-07

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Dawson, Phil	K	5-11	200	11	Texas	FA-99	FA-Oak-98
2 Hodges, Reggie	P	6-0	220	3	Ball State	FA-09	D6-StL-05
64 Pontbriand, Ryan	LS	6-2	255	7	Rice	D5a-03	D5a-Cle-03
15 Zastudil, Dave	P	6-3	220	8	Ohio	FA-Bal-06	D4-Bal-02

Ric Fogel

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	80	Brian Robiskie
	87	Mike Furrey
WR	11	Mohamed Massaquoi
	88	Chansi Stuckey
LT	73	Joe Thomas
	78	John St. Clair
LG	65	Eric Steinbach
		Shawn Lauvao (R)
C	55	Alex Mack
	68	Billy Yates
RG	77	Floyd Womack
		Shawn Lauvao (R)
RT	79	Tony Pashos
	78	John St. Clair
TE	82	Benjamin Watson
	84	Robert Royal
QB	17	Jake Delhomme
		Seneca Wallace
FB	47	Lawrence Vickers
	28	Peyton Hillis
RB	35	Jerome Harrison
	34	Chris Jennings

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	98	Robaire Smith
	91	Brian Schaefering
NT	92	Shaun Rogers
	71	Ahtyba Rubin
DE	90	Kenyon Coleman
	69	C.J. Mosley
OLB	53	Matt Roth
	51	Chris Gocong
ILB	52	D'Qwell Jackson
	50	Eric Barton
ILB	99	Scott Fujita
	50	Eric Barton
OLB	96	David Bowens
	58	Marcus Benard
CB		Sheldon Brown
		Joe Haden (R)
CB	24	Eric Wright
	22	Brandon McDonald
S	26	Abram Elam
		T.J. Ward (R)
S	20	Mike Adams
	27	Nick Sorensen

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Phil Dawson
KR	16	Josh Cribbs
P	15	Dave Zastudil
PR	16	Josh Cribbs

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Eric Mangini
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Daboll
Defensive Coordinator: Rob Ryan
Asst. Head Coach/Special Teams: Brad Seely
Quarterbacks: Carl Smith
Running Backs: Gary Brown
Wide Receivers: George McDonald
Tight Ends: Steve Hagen
Offensive Line: George Warhop
Defensive Line: Bryan Cox
Linebackers: Matt Eberflus
Defensive Backs: Jerome Henderson
Defensive Quality Control: Andy Dickerson
Strength and Conditioning: Kent Johnston
Assistant Strength and Conditioning: Rick Lyle

FANTASY FLASH

Jerome Harrison burst on the scene late last season. He led the NFL with 106 carries over the final three weeks, racking up five TDs and 561 of his 862 rushing yards. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(5–11)*

Sept. 13	Minnesota		L	20–34
Sept. 20	at Denver		L	6–27
Sept. 27	at Baltimore		L	3–34
Oct. 4	Cincinnati	(ot)	L	20–23
Oct. 11	at Buffalo		W	6– 3
Oct. 18	at Pittsburgh		L	14–27
Oct. 25	Green Bay		L	3–31
Nov. 1	at Chicago		L	6–30
Nov. 16	Baltimore		L	0–16
Nov. 22	at Detroit		L	37–38
Nov. 29	at Cincinnati		L	7–16
Dec. 6	San Diego		L	23–30
Dec. 10	Pittsburgh		W	13– 6
Dec. 20	at Kansas City		W	41–34
Dec. 27	Oakland		W	23– 9
Jan. 3	Jacksonville		W	23–17

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Kansas City	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	at New Orleans	1:00 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	New England	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Carolina	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Miami	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Baltimore	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Pittsburgh	1:00 pm

pittsburgh STEELERS

2 AFC NORTH FORECAST

PITTSBURGH

AFC NORTH

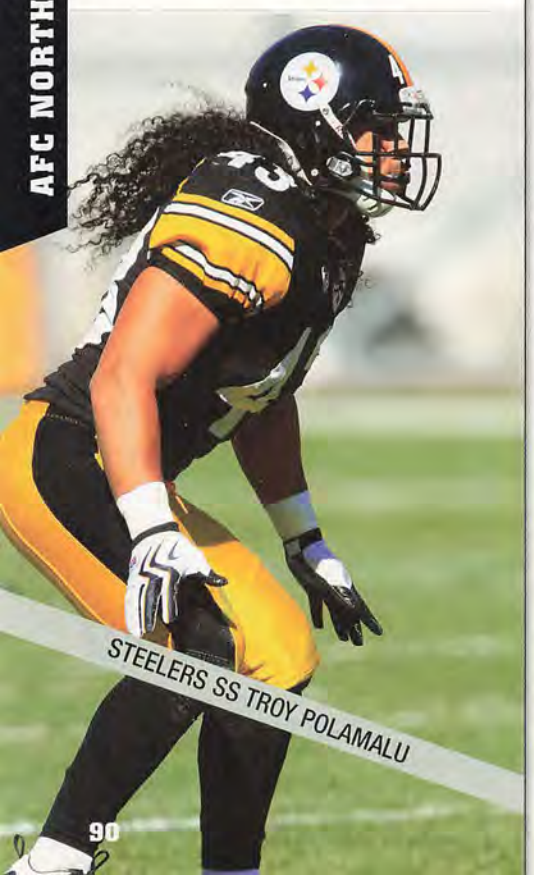
THE ORGANIZATION

PRESIDENT: Arthur J. Rooney II
DIRECTOR OF FOOTBALL OPERATIONS: Kevin Colbert
STADIUM: Heinz Field (65,050)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.steelers.com
TICKETS: 412-323-1200
TRAINING CAMP: St. Vincent College (Latrobe, Pa.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	11	
2006	8	
2007	10	PLAYOFFS
2008	12	
2009	9	

Super Bowl Champion PLAYOFFS Playoffs



STEELERS SS TROY POLAMALU

No other NFL franchise endured as ground-shaking an offseason as the Steelers. Aftershocks remain. They will continue to jolt the club long after Ben Roethlisberger's four- to six-game NFL suspension ends. Roethlisberger will be out until mid- to late October while serving his suspension for violating the league's personal-conduct policy. He was not charged after his birthday-night incident in Georgia, but commissioner Roger Goodell took action following the second set of allegations of sexual misconduct against him in a calendar year.

There was more. Super Bowl XLIII MVP and star receiver Santonio Holmes was traded to the New York Jets for a fifth-round draft choice hours before he was handed a four-game suspension for violating the league's substance abuse policy. On the same day Holmes' trade was announced and a Georgia district attorney declared he wouldn't pursue felony charges against Roethlisberger, kicker Jeff Reed had various misdemeanor charges against him dropped after completing community service with the Salvation Army.

Beyond criminal matters, on-field questions persist. How will Roethlisberger perform after starting cold in October? Who will replace Holmes' receptions and steady play? Can Rashard Mendenhall carry the running load by his lonesome? Can Troy Polamalu stay healthy enough to carry the defense, and maybe the entire team?

With 10 starters back from Super Bowl XL and 20 from XLIII, these old champs know best: They need health, defense and Polamalu to win. And a potent-passing Roethlisberger wouldn't hurt, either.

COACHES Mike Tomlin did something he never had to do in his first three Steelers seasons — fire assistants. While offensive coordinator Bruce Arians held his job, the line and receivers positions underwent changes, and the offense as a whole might change, too. The absence of Roethlisberger and Holmes should cause Arians to tweak his pass-first penchant through October, if not longer. Defensive coordinator Dick LeBeau must plug a leaky secondary and restore the Steelers' run-suffocating, pass-rush-manic edge. It's a safe assumption Tomlin will revert to his defensive tendencies and seek more grind-it-out games so his offense, which hardly put games out of reach last season, will lean less on that defense in 2010. ***GRADE: B-***

QUARTERBACKS The youngest quarterback to win one Super Bowl, and the second youngest to win two, now must mature under a harsh glare that isn't exactly a grow light. Will Roethlisberger return to record-setting, playoff-leading form? For one thing, the skill around him is less talented and experienced, with running back Willie Parker in Washington and Holmes, especially, in New York. For another, Roethlisberger thrived in the no-huddle, pass-it-around offense the past two seasons, but this defense and this club both require a slightly more old-school Pittsburgh offense that eats up more clock and protects an aging defense from overexposure. The Steelers, finding solace and comfort in bringing back familiar players from their recent championship seasons, traded with Tampa Bay for Byron Leftwich and added him to an interim quarterback derby already crowded with Dennis Dixon and longtime backup Charlie Batch. Most likely, Leftwich and Dixon will compete for the starting job sans No. 7; expect Dixon to start the Atlanta opener, but Leftwich to spell him if early stumbles come. However, should one of those gents perform well while Roethlisberger is out, and should the fallen star falter from there, it will be interesting to see if the playing order changes. ***GRADE: B-***

RUNNING BACKS Given the circumstances, this is the most important position on the offense … and the farthest off the radar. Parker was a Pro Bowl runner who was injury-prone the past few years. But his heir, Mendenhall, owns just 13 games experience as the fixture in the offense, a one-back set that cries for two. Mendenhall, in just his second year and his first full season after injury abbreviated his rookie campaign, cut loose for 1,063 yards in those 13 games. But, as is the poker hand played across the NFL, you need a pair. Third down back Mewelde Moore rushed for just 118 yards last year. No other back on the roster owns a game-day carry. Mendenhall needs help, particularly in short-yardage situations. No pure backup appears on the horizon unless Moore becomes a workhorse, which he did by default twice before in his six-season career. Maybe rookie Jonathan Dwyer can throw his 229 pounds around, but there must have been a reason he fell to the sixth round. ***GRADE: C+***

RECEIVERS With 400,000 miles on the odometer, Hines Ward posted his second-most productive season — 95 catches for 1,167 yards — at the age of 33. The old faithful might need to top that at 34. Gone is his over-the-middle mate, Holmes, and with him went those career highs of 79 catches for 1,248 yards last season. Mike Wallace was among the NFL's leaders with

Polamalu, Mendenhall: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

'Home'coming Wayward linebacker Larry Foote returned to his original team after 10 months away. He was released in May 2009 so he could sign with hometown Detroit, but he missed Pittsburgh, missed winning, missed inside linebacker cohort James Farrior. "It was a weird feeling being on that (Lions) sideline last year seeing those towels," he says of a Lions loss to the Steelers … in Detroit. "In my heart," he says, "I'm a Steeler. Glad to be back."

Don't Kick Him Aside Antwaan Randle El, who established the Steelers' record with four punt return touchdowns in his original 2002-05 stint, sounds as if he wouldn't mind returning to that job. "Punt return is laying in the weeds," he says. "It's something that's not going to roll over and die unless they just — *pow* — shoot me and tell me not to do it."

Conference supremacy The Steelers own a 17–5 record vs. the NFC dating to the 2003 season. Coach Mike Tomlin is 3–1 against the always-rugged NFC North in his tenure.

2009 STATS

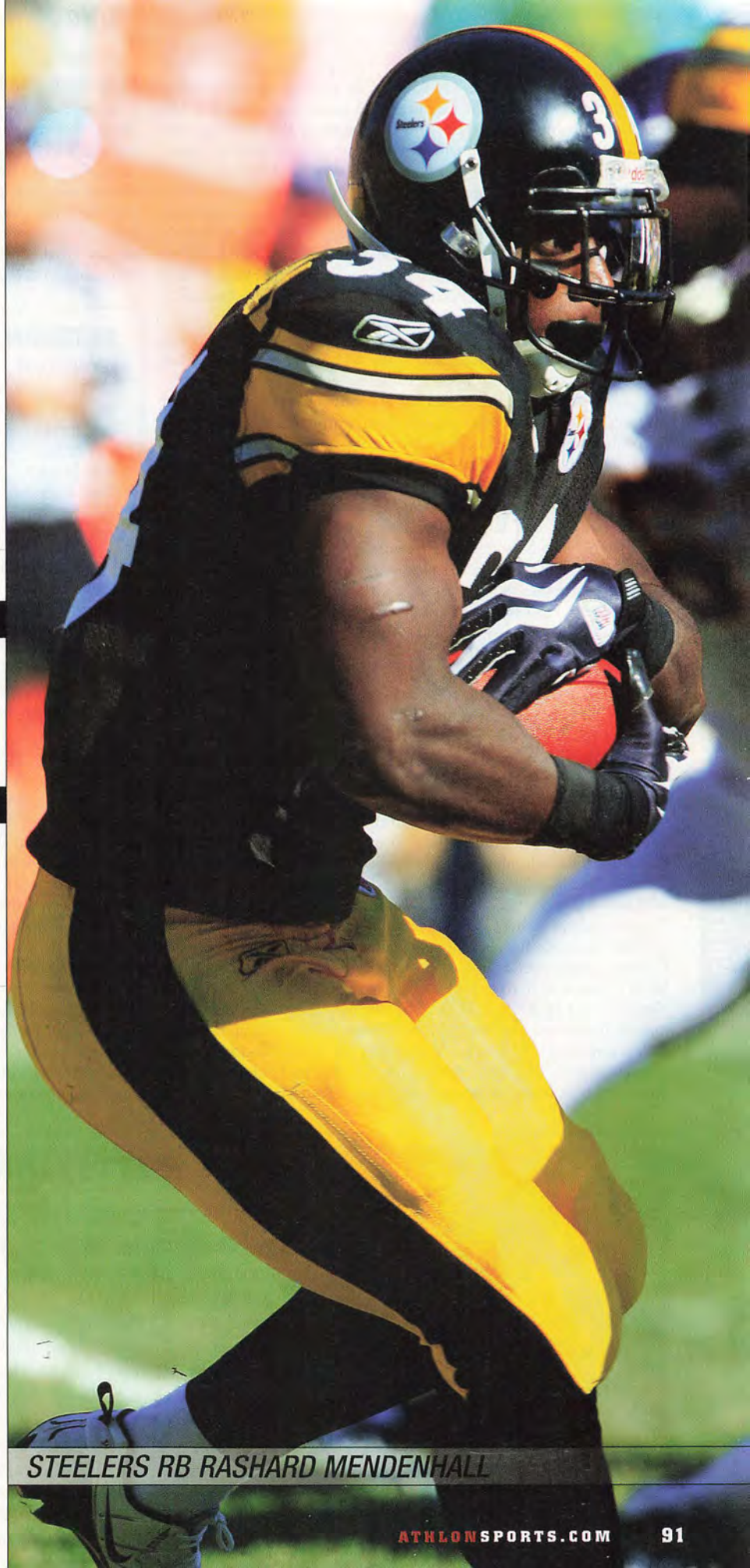
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	371.3	7	3
Rushing	112.1	19	12
Passing	259.2	9	5
Scoring	23.0	12	6
Punt Returns	8.1	18	8
Kick Returns	24.0	8	4
Red Zone TD %	48.2	T21	11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	305.3	5	4
Rushing	89.9	3	1
Passing	215.4	16	10
Scoring	20.2	T12	T7
Interceptions	12	25	14
Sacks	47	2	1
Turnover Differential	-3	20	12

SCOUTING THE STEELERS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP PITTSBURGH

"If I'm Mike Tomlin, I'm worried about Ben Roethlisberger and if he'll have the respect of the locker room anymore. It's a serious problem. He needs to get his life in order or he's going to be out of there with one more screw-up. … For the Steelers to pretend that they're not going to miss Santonio Holmes, they're fooling themselves. I know we're not sorry to see him out of the division. … They almost have to go back to running the ball 35 times a game and throwing it 20 times (with Roethlisberger gone). It's a lose-lose situation. If they get off to a fast start and are winning, what do they do when Roethlisberger comes back? … Hines Ward is getting old fast. … LaMarr Woodley is a beast. That guy can get after the quarterback. He's starting to give us more matchup problems than James Harrison at this point. … This is still a suspect offensive line. Maurkice Pouncey is going to make them better once he gets out there. … The defense has been wonderful under Dick LeBeau, but last year they had trouble closing games out. Is that scheme or execution?"



STEELERS RB RASHARD MENDENHALL

nearly 20 yards per catch as a rookie, but he won't get to run as many deep routes now that he will be entrenched as the second receiver. His speed and downfield matchup with the bombing Roethlisberger (or perhaps Leftwich) will remain a vital part of the passing game. Antwaan Randle El, the Steelers' second receiver until he left via free agency right after Super Bowl XL, is headed for the slot, a job that suits him well. It would greatly help, but it's doubtful rookie Emmanuel Sanders can win the No. 4 receiver spot in empty sets. But if Wallace can't average four catches or more each game, either Randle El or somebody else must step forward. Don't forget tight end Heath Miller; Steelers quarterbacks surely won't. He snagged a career-high 76 catches last season, and his workload figures to increase. ***GRADE: B-***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Welcome to the AFC cellar-dweller, and the league's third-worst group, when it comes to sacks allowed lately. Over the past three seasons, this bunch has graciously permitted 47, 46 and 50 sacks, and Roethlisberger escaped from seemingly a like number of near-misses each year. The front office reaction: It locked up most of this bunch to long-term deals worth $70 million. Nothing, of course, is guaranteed. Tackle Willie Colon might someday move to guard to replace Chris Kemoeatu, a solid run-blocker but lacking pass-blocker — especially if one tackle spot is won by free agent acquisition Jonathan Scott, who started eight games last year for new line coach Sean Kugler in Buffalo. First-round draftee Maurkice Pouncey, who turns 21 just before training camp, must learn quickly if he can provide any help. He'll start at guard before eventually moving to center. For now, Justin Hartwig and Max Starks return at center and left tackle, respectively. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Not ye olde Steel Curtain, but still formidable after all these years. Two of the past three years when the Steelers missed the playoffs, two noticeable variables were the injuries to, and prolonged absences by, Polamalu and end Aaron Smith. Noseguard Casey Hampton was re-signed to plug his girth and run-stopping skills into the middle of the 3-4 front, and end Brett Keisel plus 2009 first-rounder Ziggy Hood complete a sturdy line that occupies offensive linemen and gives the linebackers so much room and freedom. At some point, though, more youth must be added. ***GRADE: A-***

LINEBACKERS Larry Foote, a run-stopper extraordinaire, returns from Detroit, perhaps to start, perhaps to spell Lawrence Timmons (more of an athletic, outside guy) and the aging James Farrior at both inside spots. If Foote doesn't start at one or the other, he'll play significant snaps. James Harrison went from NFL Defensive Player of the Year in 2008 to Vanishing Act in 2009, held in some offensive linemen's arms longer than their own spouses. But LaMarr Woodley helped pick up the slack with a career-high 13.5 sacks. With Foote on patrol, Timmons wiser after a year of starting, and Harrison and Woodley ready to rumble, this position should return to its scary 2008 level. ***GRADE: A-***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Out went Holmes, in came Bryant McFadden — for the same fifth-round selection for which Holmes was traded. The Steelers did the next-best thing to trading into the top-15 picks by bringing back McFadden, who had left in free agency after Super Bowl XLIII. Restoring the McFadden/William Gay double-team at one cornerback spot should settle the other corner, Ike Taylor, and the entire secondary. The group also gets an upgrade with a re-signed Ryan Clark alongside all-universe playmaker Polamalu, whose cycle points toward a healthy 2010. As last season showed, the Steelers are mortal when Polamalu-less. ***GRADE: A-***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Will Allen	S	Tampa Bay	Tyrone Carter	S	Free agent
Arnaz Battle	WR	San Francisco	Santonio Holmes	WR	N.Y. Jets
Larry Foote	LB	Detroit	Travis Kirschke	DE	Free agent
Byron Leftwich	QB	Tampa Bay	Willie Parker	RB	Washington
Bryant McFadden	CB	Arizona	Darnell Stapleton	G	Free agent
Antwaan Randle El	WR	Washington	Deshea Townsend	CB	Free agent
Jonathan Scott	OT	Buffalo			

If nothing else, the Steelers — by re-signing noseguard Casey Hampton and safety Ryan Clark and placing a franchise tag on kicker Jeff Reed — kept much of their core. They also welcomed back Foote and Randle El for a reunion of their Super Bowl XL team and McFadden, Foote and Leftwich from XLIII. And five free agent signings plus two trades, it should be noted, constitute enormous free agent activity by the buttoned-down Steelers, who normally sign an unrecognizable special teamer or backup and call it an offseason.

SPECIALISTS After two surgeries scratched him from 2008, punter Daniel Sepulveda appeared to tire out late last season, but he has enough leg to change field position. Reed is so steady, he made the same amount of field goal tries — 27-of-31 — in back-to-back seasons. The Steelers' bugaboo, which caused Tomlin to bring in a new assistant, was allowing an NFL-worst four kickoff returns for touchdowns. Their own return game wasn't much more decorated. Sixth-round draftee Antonio Brown and third-rounder Sanders could make their kickoff and punt returns more interesting. ***GRADE: C+***

FINAL ANALYSIS So much falls on the running game, the defense and Polamalu, you have to wonder if each can support the weight. And will Roethlisberger be worth the wait? So many steady Super Bowl starters — Polamalu, Farrior, Harrison, Hampton, Ward, Miller, Smith, et al. — and so much character remain a part of this club, it's hard to count out the Steelers with or without Roethlisberger. Still, it's tough to envision this club posing too much of a threat to the elite in the AFC.

PITTSBURGH IN THE DRAFT

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Maurkice Pouncey	C/G	6-4	304	Florida
2.	Jason Worilds	OLB	6-2	262	Virginia Tech
3.	Emmanuel Sanders	WR	5-11	180	SMU
4.	Thaddeus Gibson	OLB	6-2	243	Ohio State
5.	Chris Scott	OT	6-4	319	Tennessee
5.	Crezdon Butler	CB	6-1	191	Clemson
5.	Stevenson Sylvester	LB	6-2	231	Utah
6.	Jonathan Dwyer	RB	5-11	229	Georgia Tech
6.	Antonio Brown	WR	5-10	186	Central Michigan
7.	Doug Worthington	DT	6-5	292	Ohio State

If he is as good as the Steelers believe he is, Pouncey might well move into a center-apprenticeship at right guard and start almost immediately. James Harrison is 32, but the defense doesn't exactly need help with outside pass-rushers. Worilds is big and talented enough to aptly fill forthcoming vacancies. The Steelers prefer their receivers slightly better built to go across the middle, but Sanders was durable and productive at SMU, where he also was a nifty punt returner (as was Brown at Central Michigan). The fifth round was where the Steelers found their starting cornerback — no, not Butler, but former Steelers starter Bryant McFadden. He arrived in a mid-draft trade for one of Pittsburgh's fifth-round picks.

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Batch, Charlie	QB	6-2	216	12	Eastern Michigan	FA-02	D2-Det-98
2 Dixon, Dennis	QB	6-3	209	2	Oregon	D5-08	D5-Pit-08
4 Leftwich, Byron	QB	6-5	250	7	Marshall	FA-TB-10	D1-Jac-03
7 Roethlisberger, Ben	QB	6-5	241	6	Miami (OH)	D1-04	D1-Pit-04
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
34 Mendenhall, Rashard	RB	5-10	225	2	Illinois	D1-08	D1-Pit-08
21 Moore, Mewelde	RB	5-11	209	6	Tulane	FA-Min-08	D4-Min-04
33 Redman, Isaac	RB	6-0	230	1	Bowie State	FA-09	FA-Pit-09
44 Summers, Frank	RB	5-10	240	1	UNLV	D5b-09	D5b-Pit-09
28 Vincent, Justin	RB	5-10	219	1	LSU	FA-09	FA-Atl-07
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
81 Battle, Arnaz	WR	6-1	208	7	Notre Dame	FA-SF-10	D6-SF-03
80 Bright, Eugene	TE	6-4	268	1	Purdue	FA-09	FA-Phi-09
13 Chery, Jason	WR	5-10	192	1	UL Lafayette	FA-09	FA-Car-09
19 Grisham, Tyler	WR	5-11	180	1	Clemson	FA-09	FA-Pit-09
85 Johnson, David	TE	6-2	260	1	Arkansas State	D7b-09	D7b-Pit-09
11 Logan, Stefan	WR	5-6	180	1	South Dakota	FA-09	FA-Mia-07
49 McHugh, Sean	TE	6-5	265	6	Penn State	FA-08	D7-Ten-04
83 Miller, Heath	TE	6-5	256	5	Virginia	D1-05	D1-Pit-05
82 Randle El, Antwaan	WR	5-10	185	8	Indiana	FA-Was-10	D2-Pit-02
89 Spaeth, Matt	TE	6-7	270	3	Minnesota	D3-07	D3-Pit-07
14 Sweed, Limas	WR	6-4	220	2	Texas	D2-08	D2-Pit-08
17 Wallace, Mike	WR	6-0	199	1	Ole Miss	D3b-09	D3b-Pit-09
86 Ward, Hines	WR	6-0	205	12	Georgia	D3b-98	D3b-Pit-98
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
74 Colon, Willie	T	6-3	315	4	Hofstra	D4a-06	D4a-Pit-06
79 Essex, Trai	G/T	6-5	324	5	Northwestern	D3-05	D3-Pit-05
73 Foster, Ramon	T	6-6	325	1	Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Pit-09
62 Hartwig, Justin	C	6-5	312	8	Kansas	FA-08	D6-Ten-02
66 Hills, Tony	T	6-5	304	2	Texas	D4-08	D4-Pit-08
68 Kemoeatu, Chris	G	6-3	344	5	Utah	D6-05	D6-Pit-05
64 Legursky, Doug	C	6-1	315	1	Marshall	FA-08	FA-Pit-08
72 Scott, Jonathan	T	6-6	318	3	Texas	FA-Buf-10	D5-Det-06
78 Starks, Max	T	6-8	345	6	Florida	D3-04	D3-Pit-04
65 Urbik, Kraig	G	6-5	323	1	Wisconsin	D3a-09	D3a-Pit-09
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
93 Eason, Nick	DE	6-3	305	7	Clemson	FA-07	D4-Den-03
98 Hampton, Casey	NG	6-1	325	9	Texas	D1-01	D1-Pit-01
77 Harris, Ra'Shon	DE	6-5	300	1	Oregon	D6-09	D6-Pit-09
76 Hoke, Chris	NT	6-2	305	9	BYU	FA-01	FA-Pit-01
96 Hood, Ziggy	DE	6-3	300	1	Missouri	D1-09	D1-Pit-09
99 Keisel, Brett	DE	6-5	285	8	BYU	D7b-02	D7b-Pit-02
69 McLendon, Steve	DT	6-4	280	1	Troy	FA-09	FA-Pit-09
91 Smith, Aaron	DE	6-5	298	11	Northern Colorado	D4-99	D4-Pit-99
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
55 Bailey, Patrick	LB	6-4	235	2	Duke	FA-08	FA-Pit-08
51 Farrior, James	LB	6-2	243	13	Virginia	FA-NYJ-02	D1-NYJ-97
50 Foote, Larry	LB	6-1	239	8	Michigan	FA-Det-10	D4-Pit-02
57 Fox, Keyaron	LB	6-3	235	6	Georgia Tech	FA-KC-08	D3-KC-04
54 Frazier, Andre	LB	6-5	245	5	Cincinnati	FA-07	FA-Pit-05
92 Harrison, James	LB	6-0	242	6	Kent State	FA-04	FA-Pit-02
94 Timmons, Lawrence	LB	6-1	234	3	Florida State	D1-07	D1-Pit-07
53 Williams, Johnny	LB	6-2	246	1	Kentucky	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
56 Woodley, LaMarr	LB	6-2	265	3	Michigan	D2-07	D2-Pit-07
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Allen, Will	S	6-1	200	6	Ohio State	FA-TB-10	D4-TB-04
27 Burnett, Joe	CB	5-10	192	1	Central Florida	D5a-09	D5a-Pit-09
25 Clark, Ryan	S	5-11	205	8	LSU	FA-Was-06	FA-NYG-02
22 Gay, William	CB	5-10	190	3	Louisville	D5b-07	D5b-Pit-07
31 Harris, Tuff	S	6-0	198	3	Montana	FA-09	FA-Mia-07
20 Lewis, Keenan	DB	6-0	208	1	Oregon State	D3c-09	D3c-Pit-09
37 Madison, Anthony	CB	5-9	180	4	Alabama	FA-09	FA-Pit-06
McFadden, Bryant	CB	6-0	190	5	Florida State	T-Ari-10	D2-Pit-05
29 Mundy, Ryan	S	6-1	209	1	West Virginia	D6b-08	D6b-Pit-08
43 Polamalu, Troy	S	5-10	207	7	USC	D1-03	D1-Pit-03
24 Taylor, Ike	CB	6-2	195	7	UL Lafayette	D4-03	D4-Pit-03
35 Williams, Trae	CB	5-10	195	1	South Florida	FA-09	D5-Jac-08
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
5 Czech, Piotr	K	6-5	210	1	Wagner	FA-09	FA-Bal-08
8 Graessle, Adam	P	6-4	225	1	Pittsburgh	FA-09	FA-GB-10
3 Reed, Jeff	K	5-11	225	8	North Carolina	FA-02	FA-NO-02
61 Retkofsky, Jared	LS	6-5	260	2	TCU	FA-09	FA-Pit-07
9 Sepulveda, Daniel	P	6-3	230	3	Baylor	D4a-07	D4a-Pit-07
60 Warren, Greg	LS	6-3	252	5	North Carolina	FA-05	FA-Pit-05

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	86	Hines Ward
	81	Arnaz Battle
WR	17	Mike Wallace
	14	Antonio Brown (R)
WR	82	Antwaan Randle El
	18	Emmanuel Sanders (R)
LT	78	Max Starks
	72	Jonathan Scott
LG	68	Chris Kemoeatu
	65	Kraig Urbik
C	62	Justin Hartwig
		Maurkice Pouncey (R)
RG		Maurkice Pouncey (R)
	79	Trai Essex
RT	74	Willie Colon
	72	Jonathan Scott
TE	83	Heath Miller
	89	Matt Spaeth
QB	7	Ben Roethlisberger
	2	Dennis Dixon
RB	34	Rashard Mendenhall
	41	Jonathan Dwyer (R)

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	91	Aaron Smith
	96	Ziggy Hood
NG	98	Casey Hampton
	76	Chris Hoke
DE	99	Brett Keisel
	77	Ra'Shon Harris
OLB	92	James Harrison
	94	Lawrence Timmons
ILB	94	Lawrence Timmons
	50	Larry Foote
ILB	51	James Farrior
	50	Larry Foote
OLB	56	LaMarr Woodley
	97	Jason Worilds (R)
CB		Bryant McFadden
	22	William Gay
CB	24	Ike Taylor
	27	Joe Burnett
SS	43	Troy Polamalu
	20	Keenan Lewis
FS	25	Ryan Clark
	26	Will Allen

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Jeff Reed
KR	14	Antonio Brown (R)
P	9	Daniel Sepulveda
PR	82	Antwaan Randle El

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Mike Tomlin
Offensive Coordinator: Bruce Arians
Defensive Coordinator: Dick LeBeau
Special Teams Coordinator: Al Everest
Asst. Special Teams: Amos Jones
Quarterbacks: Randy Fichtner
Running Backs: Kirby Wilson
Wide Receivers: Scottie Montgomery
Tight Ends: James Daniel
Offensive Line: Sean Kugler
Offensive Assistant: Harold Goodwin
Defensive Line Coach/Asst. Head Coach: John Mitchell
Linebackers: Keith Butler
Defensive Backs: Ray Horton
Defensive Assistant: Jerry Olsavsky

FANTASY FLASH

Tight end **Heath Miller** has caught five or more touchdowns in four of his five NFL seasons. He tied with wide receivers Hines Ward and Mike Wallace for the team lead a year ago. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(9–7)*

Sept. 10	Tennessee	(ot)	W	13–10
Sept. 20	at Chicago		L	14–17
Sept. 27	at Cincinnati		L	20–23
Oct. 4	San Diego		W	38–28
Oct. 11	at Detroit		W	28–20
Oct. 18	Cleveland		W	27–14
Oct. 25	Minnesota		W	27–17
Nov. 9	at Denver		W	28–10
Nov. 15	Cincinnati		L	12–18
Nov. 22	at Kansas City	(ot)	L	24–27
Nov. 29	at Baltimore	(ot)	L	17–20
Dec. 6	Oakland		L	24–27
Dec. 10	at Cleveland		L	6–13
Dec. 20	Green Bay		W	37–36
Dec. 27	Baltimore		W	23–20
Jan. 3	at Miami		W	30–24

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	Baltimore	1:00 pm
Week 5	BYE	
Oct. 17	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	at Miami	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at New Orleans	8:20 pm
Nov. 8	at Cincinnati (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 14	New England	8:20 pm
Nov. 21	Oakland	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Baltimore	8:20 pm
Dec. 12	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	N.Y. Jets	4:15 pm
Dec. 23	Carolina (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Jan. 2	at Cleveland	1:00 pm

houston TEXANS

2 AFC SOUTH FORECAST

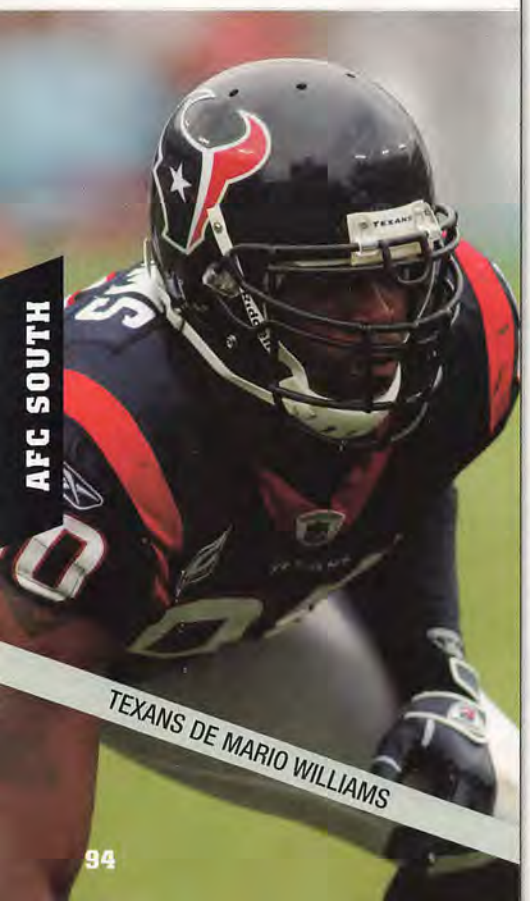
THE ORGANIZATION

FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN/CEO: Robert C. McNair
GENERAL MANAGER: Rick Smith
STADIUM: Reliant Stadium (71,500)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.houstontexans.com
TICKETS: 866-468-3926
TRAINING CAMP: Reliant Park (Houston, Texas)

HOUSTON

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	2
2006	6
2007	8
2008	8
2009	9



AFC SOUTH

TEXANS DE MARIO WILLIAMS

It's Year 9 for the Texans, and it's time to make a bold move — namely, making the playoffs for the first time. Houston took a step in the right direction last year with a 9–7 record, its first winning season. That was enough to keep Gary Kubiak employed for another year, but fans' and ownership's patience with mediocrity is wearing thin. Of the 12 NFL and AFL expansion teams since 1960, only Atlanta and New Orleans took more than eight years to reach the postseason for the first time.

To make the playoffs, the Texans must overcome the bad starts of the last two years (0–4 in 2008 and 2–3 last year). It won't be easy. Besides its tough division opponents, Houston plays the NFC East — not exactly a day at the beach — along with the more manageable AFC West and the defensive-minded Jets and Ravens.

COACHES Gary Kubiak is popular with his players and gets them to play hard, and the Texans have shown steady progress under his watch. He earned a contract extension through 2012 after the Texans rebounded from a 5–7 start to win their last four games in 2009. But his job had been in jeopardy before that finish, and this year nothing less than a playoff berth will do. Longtime Broncos assistant Rick Dennison has succeeded Kyle Shanahan, who rejoined his father in Washington, as offensive coordinator. Dennison and Kubiak believe in running the ball, as Denver's long list of 1,000-yard rushers attests, and Dennison will try to get Houston's ground game going. Frank Bush enters his second season as defensive coordinator. The Texans play a 4-3 almost exclusively, mainly because they have more qualified defensive linemen than linebackers. Bush wants to play press man coverage, but the lack of experience at cornerback could hurt. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS Matt Schaub proved last year that he could not only stay healthy for an entire season, but that he is poised to move up a level among NFL quarterbacks, just a step below the Peyton Mannings and Drew Breeses of the league. Schaub made it to the Pro Bowl and has improved every year with the Texans. He threw for a career-high 4,770 yards with 29 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. Schaub, who turns 29 in June, is entering the prime of his career, physically as well as being a team leader. No one questions his work ethic or maturity, and he has the ability and smarts to take the Texans to the playoffs. Rex Grossman, last year's backup, signed as a free agent with Washington, elevating Dan Orlovsky to the No. 2 role. Former USC star John David Booty, who spent last season in Minnesota, was signed to be the No. 3 quarterback. ***GRADE: B+***

RUNNING BACKS Kubiak has yet to find a dependable back who can give him 25 carries per week and bust an occasional big play, but he is hoping rookie Ben Tate, the team's second-round pick from Auburn, will be that guy. Tate is tough and fast and could emerge as the No. 1 back over Steve Slaton and Co. After an outstanding rookie season, Slaton slumped last year and fumbled too often. Slaton, who has plenty of speed, led the team in rushing with a mere 437 yards, although he did finish third on the Texans in receptions (44 for 417 yards). Slaton had the longest run of any Texan last year, a meager 32 yards. Ryan Moats and Arian Foster had their chances and showed flashes, but neither was consistent enough to win the starting job. Moats is just 5'8" but has big-play ability. Foster can run pretty well and catch the ball but still must demonstrate he is great at something. When the Texans use a fullback, veteran Vonta Leach is a bull-like 6'0", 265-pounder who blocks as well as anyone in the league and can catch the ball when need be. ***GRADE: C-***

RECEIVERS Schaub has developed an almost Manning-to-Marvin Harrison relationship with Andre Johnson. Everyone knows the ball is going to Johnson, but nobody can stop him. He manages to get open even when double-teamed, and he led the league in receiving yards last year while exceeding 100 catches for the third time in four years. No. 2 receiver Kevin Walter is underrated but still must improve to take a little heat off Johnson. Little David Anderson, a Wes Welker type at 5'10", 197, is a dependable No. 3 wideout. He's fearless going across the middle and catches the ball in the clutch. Talented Jacoby Jones and veteran André Davis are the backups. Tight end Owen Daniels, known more for his receiving than blocking, is returning from a torn ACL that ended his season after eight games. His expected return would ease some of the pressure on Johnson. ***GRADE: B***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN This area could be the key to Houston's season, at least offensively. The play the Texans get from their guards will probably define the success of the line. Left guard Chester Pitts started the first 114 games for Houston before suffering a torn right MCL in the

Williams, Schaub: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Honor Thy Father Dave Studdard, the father of Texans guard Kasey Studdard, was a teammate of coach Gary Kubiak's with the Denver Broncos from 1983-88. Dave started at right tackle, right guard and left tackle in his 10 seasons in Denver.

Ram Reunion Guard Mike Brisiel, tight end Joel Dreessen and receiver David Anderson, friends from their days at Colorado State, lived together in a rented house in Houston until Dreessen got married last year. "It was like college, only we had more money," says Anderson.

The Other Side of Kubiak Kubiak went to a hospital to visit a sportswriter who suffered cardiac arrest last Labor Day weekend. Three days later the Texans won at Tennessee and the writer was presented a game ball signed by Kubiak.

Presidential Pardon George Dennison, the father of new offensive coordinator Rick Dennison, will be retiring in August as president of the University of Montana.

2009 STATS

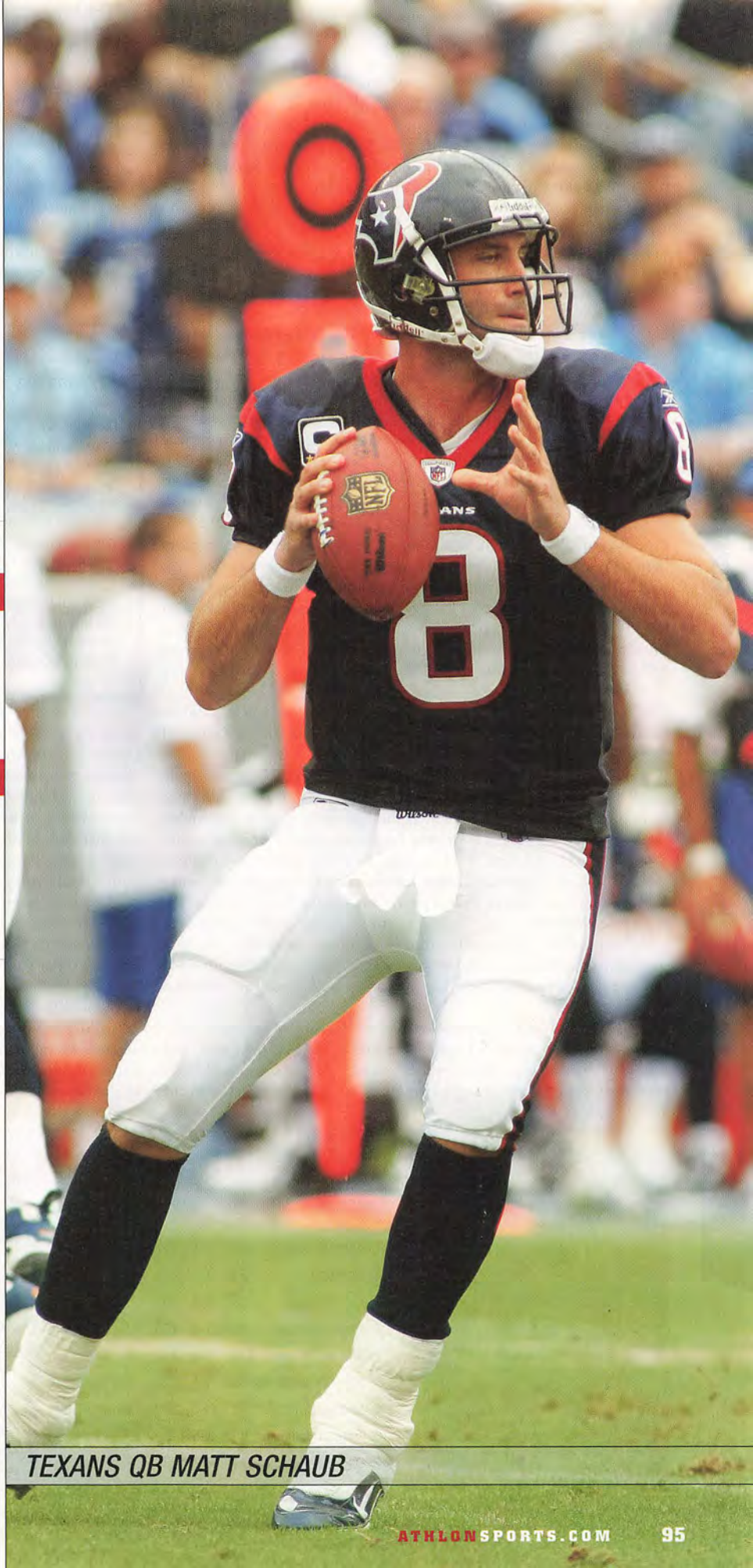
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	383.1	4	2
Rushing	92.2	30	14
Passing	290.9	1	1
Scoring	24.2	10	5
Punt Returns	10.0	T9	4
Kick Returns	22.6	T16	T9
Red Zone TD %	52.4	12	6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	324.9	T13	7
Rushing	106.9	T10	T5
Passing	217.9	18	11
Scoring	20.8	17	10
Interceptions	14	T20	T12
Sacks	30	25	14
Turnover Differential	-1	19	11

SCOUTING THE TEXANS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP HOUSTON

"Andre Johnson is the best receiver in the NFL, and that includes Larry Fitzgerald. He's a great kid, too. You've got to respect him. He keeps his mouth shut and goes out and makes plays. … All Matt Schaub does is win. I just think the quarterback is pretty good. He might be one of the most underrated players in the NFL. … Houston is a lot better than people think they are. They lost the tight end last year and that really hurt them. Gary Kubiak loves the tight end. … Houston is a team on the verge of breaking out. As solid as they were going into the draft, they have positioned themselves to make a run at the playoffs. … I loved their draft. They needed a cornerback, and they got a very good one, Kareem Jackson out of Alabama. Ben Tate will be an instant impact player for them and give them the 1-2 punch with Steve Slaton. … They have been loading up on the defensive side with young talent for a couple of years; it's a team that doesn't have many holes and has definitely improved depth. … I thought other than maybe a complement to take pressure off Andre Johnson, they are a team that's totally stacked."



TEXANS QB MATT SCHAUB

second game last year, elevating Kasey Studdard to starter, a job he figures to resume this season (especially with Pitts no longer around). Right guard Mike Brisiel also went down, eventually moving rookie Antoine Caldwell into the starting job. With Brisiel battling his way back and free agent addition Wade Smith around, there will be plenty of competition at guard this fall. Smith also can play center or even tackle, if needed. Center Chris Myers is merely an OK player who needs good people around him. People were surprised when the Texans drafted Duane Brown in the first round in 2008, but he has started every game the last two years at left tackle and continues to improve. Eric Winston, entering his fifth year, is a solid right tackle. ***GRADE: C+***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN No matter whom the Texans draft or sign, it doesn't seem like they can turn the defensive line into anything special. They once had three first-round draft picks on the line and two of them, All-Pro end Mario Williams and tackle Amobi Okoye, are still around. Last year they brought in Antonio Smith to complement Williams at the other end and signed tackle Shaun Cody to replace Travis Johnson, the other former No. 1 pick. Neither player turned heads. Williams is a fine pass-rusher; he racked up nine sacks and made his third Pro Bowl last year. He still needs to develop a bull rush to complement his outside speed, and he's not great against the run. He rarely draws a double team, which doesn't make his teammates better. At 23, Okoye is still young, but he should be more accomplished entering his fourth season in the league. There is good depth with tough Tim Bulman, DelJuan Robinson, rookie Earl Mitchell (third-round pick out of Arizona) and second-year pro Connor Barwin, a speed guy coming off the edge who the Texans hope soon will be a pass-rushing star. ***GRADE: B-***

LINEBACKERS This area of the defense doesn't need help. Middle linebacker DeMeco Ryans started off as the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2006 and is coming off his second Pro Bowl appearance. Ryans is one of the game's most underrated players. He is extremely smart and quick and rarely has a bad game. He also was an able tutor to Brian Cushing, who was named the league's top defensive rookie three years after Ryans. The rookie Pro Bowler showed his versatility with five sacks and four interceptions, but he'll miss the first four games while serving a suspension for violating the league's substance abuse policy. Zac Diles recovered from a broken leg in 2008 to win the weak-side linebacker job. There isn't much depth beyond third-year man Xavier Adibi, who could contribute on the weak side, but that shouldn't be a factor as long as the three starters remain healthy. No subs are needed because they play the pass as well as the run. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE BACKS The secondary is still an area of concern, especially with star cornerback Dunta Robinson signing with Atlanta, and it's likely the starting corners will be young. Glover Quin and Brice McCain received significant playing time last year as rookies, and the team's first-round pick this year, Kareem Jackson of Alabama, will join in the battle for the starting jobs. They will compete with veterans Jacques Reeves and Fred Bennett. Houston found an excellent strong safety early last season when it brought in Bernard Pollard from Kansas City. Pollard is a hitter who quickly became the leader of the secondary. The Texans definitely need to upgrade beyond Pollard at safety, where the team has been playing musical chairs for too many years. Eugene Wilson, who can play either safety, was one of only three players on the Texans with more than one interception last year. John Busing enters camp listed No. 1 at free safety almost by default. ***GRADE: D+***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Darnell Bing	LB	Detroit	Rex Grossman	QB	Washington
John David Booty	QB	Minnesota	Chester Pitts	G	Free agent
Neil Rackers	K	Arizona	Dunta Robinson	CB	Atlanta
Wade Smith	G	Kansas City			

Robinson, Houston's best defensive back, was a big loss. The Texans dubbed him the franchise player for 2009 and Robinson rebelled, complaining about making a mere $10 million for the season. That didn't fly well with fans, but replacing him will be difficult. Rackers could be the team's best addition if he beats out veteran Kris Brown. Brown will have to kick better in camp than he did last season to hold his job. Smith has played virtually everywhere on the offensive line but will probably be used to push Kasey Studdard and Antoine Caldwell at guard.

SPECIALISTS The Texans didn't just bring in some competition for kicker Kris Brown; they signed veteran kicker Neil Rackers from Arizona to a two-year, $4.1 million contract. Rackers, a 10-year veteran, missed only one regular-season field goal attempt last season, and Brown will have to be at his best to keep his job. Brown struggled for the first time last year when he missed tying field goal attempts in back-to-back games against division rivals Indianapolis and Tennessee. Punter Matt Turk, 42, is as dependable as there is. Jones can return a punt to the house, but speedy rookie Trindon Holliday looks tailor-made for that job. Davis is a better-than-average kickoff returner who has a knack for finding holes in the coverage. He averaged 23.7 yards per return last season. ***GRADE: B-***

FINAL ANALYSIS A team that flirted with playoff contention last year addressed its most pressing needs at running back and in the secondary. Wrangling the AFC South title away from the Colts isn't likely, but reaching the playoffs for the first time in franchise history is an attainable goal.

Paul Levy

HOUSTON IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Kareem Jackson	CB	5-11	192	Alabama
2. Ben Tate	RB	5-11	218	Auburn
3. Earl Mitchell	DT	6-2	295	Arizona
4. Darryl Sharpton	LB	6-0	235	Miami
4. Garrett Graham	TE	6-3	250	Wisconsin
5. Sherrick McManis	CB	6-1	190	Northwestern
6. Shelley Smith	G	6-4	300	Colorado State
6. Trindon Holliday	WR	5-5	159	LSU
7. Dorin Dickerson	WR	6-2	230	Pittsburgh

Jackson could start immediately in a secondary in desperate need of help. His experience in a pro-style defense at Alabama gives him a head start. McManis might figure into the mix, too. Don't be surprised if Tate, who rushed for 1,362 yards in a strong senior season at Auburn, emerges as the starting running back. Mitchell could be part of a rotation at defensive tackle. Graham should get on the field right away because the Texans run many plays using two or three tight ends. Dickerson is another college tight end, but the Texans will see what he can do at wide receiver. The diminutive Holliday should challenge Jacoby Jones for the punt return job. He is scary fast and finished second in the nation in punt returns last year with an 18.1-yard average.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Booty, John David	QB	6-13	213	1	USC	FA-Min-10	D5-Min-08
7 Orlovsky, Dan	QB	6-5	230	5	Connecticut	FA-Det-09	D5-Det-05
8 Schaub, Matt	QB	6-5	239	6	Virginia	T-Atl-07	D3-Atl-04
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
37 Foster, Arian	RB	6-1	222	1	Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
27 Henry, Chris	RB	5-11	230	3	Arizona	FA-09	D2-Ten-07
38 Johnson, Jeremiah	RB	5-9	210	1	Oregon	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
44 Leach, Vonta	FB	6-0	265	6	East Carolina	FA-06	FA-GB-04
21 Moats, Ryan	RB	5-8	208	5	Louisiana Tech	FA-08	D3-Phi-05
20 Slaton, Steve	RB	5-9	215	2	West Virginia	D3b-08	D3b-Hou-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
89 Anderson, David	WR	5-10	197	4	Colorado State	D7-06	D7-Hou-06
86 Casey, James	TE	6-3	244	1	Rice	D5-09	D5-Hou-09
81 Daniels, Owen	TE	6-3	245	4	Wisconsin	D4-06	D4-Hou-06
11 Davis, André	WR	6-1	194	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Buf-07	D2-Cle-02
85 Dreessen, Joel	TE	6-4	248	4	Colorado State	FA-07	D6-NYJ-05
82 Gaines, Michael	TE	6-2	267	6	Central Florida	FA-Cle-10	D7-Car-04
87 Hill, Anthony	TE	6-6	269	1	NC State	D4b-09	D4b-Hou-09
80 Johnson, Andre	WR	6-3	228	7	Miami	D1-03	D1-Hou-03
12 Jones, Jacoby	WR	6-2	206	3	Lane College	D3-07	D3-Hou-07
17 Martinez, Glenn	WR	6-1	185	4	Saginaw Valley	FA-09	FA-Pit-04
88 Sherrod, Dezmond	TE	6-2	250	1	Mississippi State	FA-09	FA-Pit-08
83 Walter, Kevin	WR	6-3	215	7	Eastern Michigan	FA-Cin-06	D7-NYG-03
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
65 Brisiel, Mike	G	6-5	304	2	Colorado State	FA-06	FA-Hou-06
76 Brown, Duane	T	6-4	313	2	Virginia Tech	D1-08	D1-Hou-08
78 Butler, Rashad	T	6-4	310	4	Miami	W-Car-07	D3-Car-06
62 Caldwell, Antoine	C	6-3	312	1	Alabama	D3-09	D3-Hou-09
61 Crummey, Andrew	G	6-5	301	2	Maryland	FA-09	FA-Was-08
75 Helms, Brett	C	6-2	298	1	LSU	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
55 Myers, Chris	C	6-4	299	5	Miami	T-Den-08	D6-Den-05
74 Smith, Wade	G/T	6-4	296	7	Memphis	FA-KC-10	D3-Mia-03
79 Stenavich, Adam	T	6-4	308	1	Michigan	FA-08	FA-Car-06
64 Studdard, Kasey	G	6-3	306	3	Texas	D6-07	D6-Hou-07
63 White, Chris	C	6-2	290	5	Southern Miss	FA-06	FA-GB-05
73 Winston, Eric	T	6-7	314	4	Miami	D3b-06	D3b-Hou-06
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
98 Barwin, Connor	DE	6-4	256	1	Cincinnati	D2-09	D2-Hou-09
93 Bulman, Tim	DE	6-4	267	3	Boston College	FA-06	FA-Ari-05
95 Cody, Shaun	DT	6-4	310	5	USC	FA-Det-09	D2-Det-05
99 Egboh, Pannel	DE	6-6	276	1	Stanford	FA-09	FA-SF-09
96 Jamison, Tim	DE	6-3	270	1	Michigan	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
72 Nading, Jesse	DE	6-5	264	2	Colorado State	FA-08	FA-Hou-08
97 Okam, Frank	DT	6-5	338	2	Texas	D5-08	D5-Hou-08
91 Okoye, Amobi	DT	6-2	296	3	Louisville	D1-07	D1-Hou-07
66 Robinson, DelJuan	DT	6-3	320	2	Mississippi State	FA-07	FA-Hou-07
94 Smith, Antonio	DE	6-4	285	6	Oklahoma State	FA-Ari-09	D5-Ari-04
90 Williams, Mario	DE	6-6	288	4	NC State	D1-06	D1-Hou-06
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
52 Adibi, Xavier	LB	6-2	243	2	Virginia Tech	D4-08	D4-Hou-08
57 Bentley, Kevin	LB	6-0	245	8	Northwestern	FA-Sea-08	D4-Cle-02
50 Bing, Darnell	LB	6-2	220	2	USC	FA-09	D4-Oak-06
56 Cushing, Brian	LB	6-3	262	1	USC	D1-09	D1-Hou-09
54 Diles, Zac	LB	6-2	237	3	Kansas State	D7-07	D7-Hou-07
59 Ryans, DeMeco	LB	6-1	248	4	Alabama	D2-06	D2-Hou-06
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
34 Barber, Dominique	SS	6-0	214	2	Minnesota	D6-08	D6-Hou-08
40 Busing, John	FS	6-2	217	4	Miami (Ohio)	FA-09	FA-Cin-06
32 Bennett, Fred	CB	6-1	200	3	South Carolina	D4-07	D4-Hou-07
41 McCain, Brice	CB	5-9	179	1	Utah	D6-09	D6-Hou-09
28 Molden, Antwaun	CB	6-1	192	2	Eastern Kentucky	D3a-08	D3a-Hou-08
33 Nolan, Troy	SS	6-2	206	1	Arizona State	D7-09	D7-Hou-09
38 Parson, Mark	CB	5-10	192	1	Ohio	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
31 Pollard, Bernard	SS	6-1	224	4	Purdue	FA-09	D2-KC-06
29 Quin, Glover	CB	6-0	203	1	New Mexico	D4a-09	D4a-Hou-09
35 Reeves, Jacques	CB	5-11	188	6	Purdue	FA-Dal-08	D7-Dal-04
26 Wilson, Eugene	FS	5-10	200	7	Illinois	FA-08	D2-NE-03
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
3 Brown, Kris	K	5-11	212	11	Nebraska	FA-Pit-02	D7-Pit-99
48 Pittman, Bryan	LS	6-3	265	7	Washington	FA-09	FA-Cle-03
4 Rackers, Neil	K	6-1	206	10	Illinois	FA-Ari-10	D6-Cin-00
1 Turk, Matt	P	6-5	248	14	Wisconsin-White.	FA-07	FA-GB-93

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	80	Andre Johnson
	11	Andre Davis
WR	83	Kevin Walter
	89	David Anderson
LT	76	Duane Brown
	78	Rashad Butler
LG	64	Kasey Studdard
	74	Wade Smith
C	55	Chris Myers
	63	Chris White
RG	62	Antoine Caldwell
	65	Mike Brisiel
RT	73	Eric Winston
	78	Rashad Butler
TE	81	Owen Daniels
	85	Joel Dreessen
QB	8	Matt Schaub
	7	Dan Orlovsky
FB	44	Vonta Leach
	86	James Casey
RB	20	Steve Slaton
	43	Ben Tate (R)

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LDE	94	Antonio Smith
	98	Connor Barwin
DT	91	Amobi Okoye
	66	DelJuan Robinson
DT	95	Shaun Cody
	92	Jeff Zgonina
RDE	90	Mario Williams
	93	Tim Bulman
SLB	56	Brian Cushing
	52	Xavier Adibi
MLB	59	DeMeco Ryans
	57	Kevin Bentley
WLB	54	Zac Diles
		Darryl Sharpton (R)
CB	29	Glover Quin
	41	Brice McCain
CB	25	Kareem Jackson (R)
	35	Jacques Reeves
SS	31	Bernard Pollard
	25	Nick Ferguson
FS	40	John Busing
	42	Brian Russell

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Kris Brown
KR	11	Andre Davis
P	1	Matt Turk
PR	12	Jacoby Jones

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Gary Kubiak
Offensive Coordinator: Rick Dennison
Defensive Coordinator: Frank Bush
Special Teams Coordinator: Joe Marciano
Quarterbacks: Greg Knapp
Running Backs: Chick Harris
Wide Receivers: Larry Kirksey
Tight Ends: Brian Pariani
Offensive Line: John Benton
Assistant Offensive Line Coach: Frank Pollack
Offensive Assistant: Bruce Matthews
Offensive Assistant: Marc Lubick
Senior Defensive Assistant: Ray Rhodes
Asst. Head Coach/Defensive Line: Bill Kollar
Linebackers: Johnny Holland
Assistant Linebackers: Robert Saleh
Defensive Backs: David Gibbs
Assistant Defensive Backs: Perry Carter
Strength and Conditioning: Cedric Smith

FANTASY FLASH

Prior to tearing his ACL in Week 8, tight end **Owen Daniels** was on pace for 89 catches, 1,136 yards and 11 TDs. He is expected to be ready for training camp this year. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(9–7)*

Sept. 13	N.Y. Jets	L	7–24
Sept. 20	at Tennessee	W	34–31
Sept. 27	Jacksonville	L	24–31
Oct. 4	Oakland	W	29– 6
Oct. 11	at Arizona	L	21–28
Oct. 18	at Cincinnati	W	28–17
Oct. 25	San Francisco	W	24–21
Nov. 1	at Buffalo	W	31–10
Nov. 8	at Indianapolis	L	17–20
Nov. 23	Tennessee	L	17–20
Nov. 29	Indianapolis	L	27–35
Dec. 6	at Jacksonville	L	18–23
Dec. 13	Seattle	W	34– 7
Dec. 20	at St. Louis	W	16–13
Dec. 27	at Miami	W	27–20
Jan. 3	New England	W	34–27

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Indianapolis	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Washington	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	Dallas	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at Oakland	4:05 pm
Oct. 10	N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	Kansas City	1:00 pm
Week 7	BYE	
Nov. 1	at Indianapolis (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 7	San Diego	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Tennessee	1:00 pm
Dec. 2	at Philadelphia (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 13	Baltimore (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 19	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Denver	4:05 pm
Jan. 2	Jacksonville	1:00 pm

indianapolis COLTS

1 AFC SOUTH FORECAST

INDIANAPOLIS

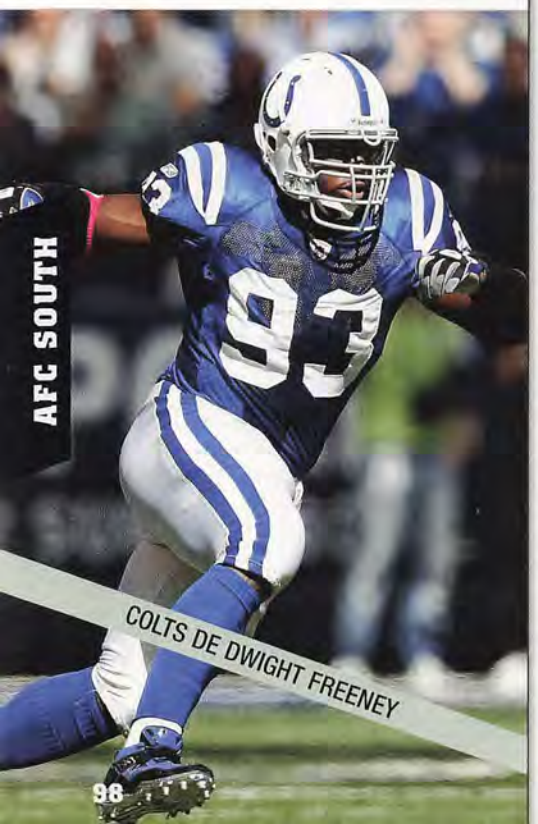
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Jim Irsay
PRESIDENT: Bill Polian
DIRECTOR OF PLAYER PERSONNEL: Tom Telesco
STADIUM: Lucas Oil Stadium (63,000)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.colts.com
TICKETS: 317-297-7000
TRAINING CAMP: Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (Terre Haute, Ind.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	14	PLAYOFFS
2006	12	
2007	13	PLAYOFFS
2008	12	PLAYOFFS
2009	14	

Super Bowl Champion · Conference Champion · PLAYOFFS Playoffs



COLTS DE DWIGHT FREENEY

Colts president Bill Polian irked some of his players when he blamed the team's 31–17 Super Bowl XLIV loss to New Orleans on the offensive line and special teams. It's not exactly the customary way to move forward. And the line criticism didn't make sense. The guys blocking for Peyton Manning allowed a franchise-low 13 sacks of the four-time NFL MVP. The Saints didn't get him, either. And the Colts' beleaguered 32nd-ranked running game gained 99 yards on 19 carries in the finale. Still, the Colts have taken steps to get bigger and stronger up front.

It's easy to forget that the Colts started 14–0 in the wake of the decision to sit starters and ignore history, sparking a national debate. Fans were outraged. Players were upset, too.

But while the fallout from such a disconnect would be a problem for most organizations, it should not be for the Colts, who win in the regular season like no other team. Their unprecedented streak of 12 victories or more per year is at seven and counting.

COACHES Coach Jim Caldwell and Polian tweaked the Tony Dungy setup last year and almost duplicated the former coach's NFL championship from the 2006 season. But questions linger about how Caldwell and his staff were outcoached by the Saints in the Super Bowl. One change for 2010 is the move of veteran offensive coordinator Tom Moore to senior offensive consultant, which sounds a lot like early retirement. Moore has been the only coordinator Manning has known, so one must wonder what changes new coordinator Clyde Christensen might make. Regardless of who calls in play suggestions, Manning runs the offense. That control is as much a constant as the Colts' tendency to pass to set up the run. Veteran defensive coordinator Larry Coyer, back for his second season, was praised extensively when the Colts blitzed more and won with defense. Injuries, however, revealed the team's lack of depth in the pass rush and secondary. The pressure remains on Coyer, 66, to produce, and considering how Moore is being eased out of the picture, Coyer could end up with a creative new job title, too. ***GRADE: A-***

QUARTERBACKS Manning didn't exactly distance himself from the national perception that he struggles in the playoffs. Just when it seemed as if he would drive the Colts to a tying touchdown in the Super Bowl, he threw a pick-six that clinched the game for the Saints and dropped his career playoff record to 9–9. Still, few can play the position the way he does, either from a statistical standpoint or based on how he manages the game from the line. The Colts do not appear to have his successor yet. Second-year pro Curtis Painter didn't dazzle last year, but he enters as the frontrunner for the No. 2 job now that Jim Sorgi has switched Mannings and agreed to hold a clipboard for Eli in New York. ***GRADE: A***

RUNNING BACKS Joseph Addai has led the Colts in rushing each of the past four seasons, but he hasn't been a workhorse back like the franchise's all-time leader Edgerrin James. Content to do whatever the offense needs, Addai doesn't typically put up huge yardage numbers. Well, the Colts need more yardage. It was supposed to be a point of emphasis last year, yet a 31st-ranked rushing attack in 2008 dropped to the cellar. If Addai doesn't produce, the Colts won't hesitate to give more carries to Donald Brown, who wasn't as consistent as Addai but did produce bigger plays as a rookie last season. Brown is an unselfish team player but must show he can be the guy. ***GRADE: D+***

RECEIVERS Reggie Wayne is one of the game's best receivers, and youngsters Pierre Garçon and Austin Collie had breakthrough seasons. So how will Anthony Gonzalez fit in? Gonzo was the No. 2 — for about one quarter of the 2009 opener — before going down for the year with a knee injury. While Gonzalez would appear to have more speed than Garçon outside, camp could provide an intriguing competition. Garçon set an AFC Championship Game record with 11 receptions and had a touchdown catch in the Super Bowl, but the lasting memory for many is a second-quarter drop against the Saints. It took two years for Garçon to emerge, but he must minimize the drops, because Manning has plenty of other targets. Collie showed as a rookie that he's already one of the league's best slot receivers. Like Wayne, tight end Dallas Clark is a proven Pro Bowl talent. The addition of rookie Brody Eldridge as a blocking tight end might free up Clark to run even more routes and put up gaudier numbers than his career-high 100 catches and 1,106 yards in 2009, unfathomable as that might seem. ***GRADE: A+***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The push to get bigger started with the offseason release of starting guard Ryan Lilja (6'2", 290 pounds) and the free agent signings of tackle Adam Terry (6'8", 335) and guard Andy Alleman (6'4", 310). Then the Colts drafted Tennessee guard Jacques McClendon (6'3", 324). Some were surprised the Colts didn't draft another tackle, but maybe

Freeney: Joe Robbins/Getty Images; Manning: Larry French/Getty Images

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Keep My Ring Safety Melvin Bullitt was so disappointed by the Colts' Super Bowl loss, he didn't want his AFC championship ring. So he gave it to his father. "It was really more about how I didn't want to accept the fact we didn't reach our goal," Bullitt says. "Each day, it eats at me. Every day."

Linebacker Loving Life After years of letting linebackers go through free agency, the Colts finally kept one. Gary Brackett signed a five-year, $33 million contract. David Thornton, Mike Peterson and Marcus Washington signed with other teams in recent years, but it's the undrafted unknown from Rutgers who became a defensive captain and stuck.

Manning Bowl II It's the game Archie and Olivia Manning agonize about. Their sons, Peyton and Eli, will face each other for the second time when the Colts host the New York Giants in Week 2. Peyton bested Eli in the first Manning Bowl, 26–21, in 2006.

Been a Long Time The Colts travel to Washington in Week 6. They haven't won in the nation's capital since 1967, when Lyndon Johnson was in the White House and the Colts were up the road in Baltimore.

Turning to Facebook Cornerback Jerraud Powers wanted to give back after a solid rookie season, so he used the social networking site Facebook to get the word out. Powers reached out to ask for ideas on how he could help in Indianapolis and his hometown of Decatur, Ala.

2009 STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	363.1	9	4
Rushing	80.9	32	16
Passing	282.2	2	2
Scoring	26.0	7	3
Punt Returns	5.2	28	15
Kick Returns	22.2	18	11
Red Zone TD %	66.0	2	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	339.2	18	9
Rushing	126.5	24	11
Passing	212.7	14	9
Scoring	19.2	8	5
Interceptions	16	15	8
Sacks	34	T16	T7
Turnover Differential	+2	T13	T6

SCOUTING THE COLTS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP INDIANAPOLIS

"The Saints showed that (Indianapolis is) beatable. If you can control the clock, that's the blueprint to beating them. Keep Peyton Manning off the field. … As long as they have No. 18 at quarterback, they'll be good. He's like a throwback to the days when quarterbacks called their own plays. He doesn't forget anything. … They're one of the smaller, quicker defenses in the league. You have to keep them off balance. … The Colts' offensive line isn't great. They're not going to beat you with the run. … The Colts' defense is good, but it has weaknesses that can be exploited. … They don't appear to be as far out in front of the division as they used to be. The gap has closed a little."

COLTS QB PEYTON MANNING

they are banking on Terry's recovery from a knee injury and delivery on the promise Baltimore saw in the second-round pick in 2005. Left tackle Charlie Johnson had a decent year after so many questioned his ability. Right tackle Ryan Diem is solid. Pro Bowl center Jeff Saturday will be 35 by camp, so his best years are behind him. It's uncertain how former college center Mike Pollak figures into the mix after losing his guard job to Kyle DeVan last year. Pollak needs to be more consistent, but he didn't seem to respond to being benched. Former second-round tackle Tony Ugoh might be the biggest disappointment of Polian's tenure in Indy. ***GRADE: C+***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Few pass-rushing sack tandems have ever been more effective than the Pro Bowl duo of Dwight Freeney and Robert Mathis, but the defense breaks down when Freeney is hurt. It did in the Super Bowl as well as in a home playoff loss to San Diego after the '07 season. The undersized Mathis can be handled by solid tackles; he didn't even have a tackle in the Super Bowl. So, the Colts drafted end Jerry Hughes in the first round in hopes of adding another pocket threat. They will be looking for depth in camp after Raheem Brock was released. Brock didn't make many big plays, but he played everywhere, which is important when you have a line rotating to stay fresh. Tackles Dan Muir and Antonio Johnson do a decent job plugging the middle. Energetic tackle Eric Foster will remain a reserve because he's undersized. ***GRADE: A-***

LINEBACKERS The Colts have defensive captain Gary Brackett in the middle and hard-hitting Clint Session on the weak side. The question is on the strong side, where Philip Wheeler has yet to show he can be a consistent playmaker. Perhaps the Colts will insert second-round pick Pat Angerer into the equation, although the thought is he was drafted to be Brackett's understudy in the middle. Maybe Angerer can show enough to play outside for a couple of years, then move to the middle when Brackett's contract ends. Say this for Brackett, he was the one defensive player who stood out for the Colts in the Super Bowl. His 13 tackles were six more than any other player on either sideline. As he says, he's still carrying that lunch pail, wearing a hard hat and rolling up his sleeves. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Jerraud Powers was exceptional in coverage as a rookie; he just needs to hang onto more interceptions. Undrafted rookie Jacob Lacey was also a lifesaver when Kelvin Hayden was hurt. So the Colts appear to have three decent cover guys, and they also add rookie Kevin Thomas. The tweak to this system from the Dungy days has had the corners play tighter on some receivers, and the three returnees are decent at that. Perhaps the biggest question mark about this team is at safety, where 2007 NFL Defensive Player of the Year Bob Sanders has now missed more regular-season games (49) than he has played (47) in his six-year career. His contract soars after this season, so he appears to be at a crossroad. Sanders played in only two games last year before tearing a biceps. He missed 10 the year before that. Another early exit and the Colts might part ways with him. Fortunately for the Colts, safety Antoine Bethea has gone to the Pro Bowl, too, and Melvin Bullitt has been steady in place of Sanders. If the guy known as Bobzilla can't terrorize ball-carriers, the Colts are used to Bethea and Bullitt. ***GRADE: B+***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS

PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM
Andy Alleman	G	Kansas City
Adam Terry	T	Baltimore

KEY LOSSES

PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Raheem Brock	DE	Free agent
Freddy Keiaho	LB	Jacksonville
Tyjuan Hagler	LB	Free agent
Marlin Jackson	FS	Philadelphia
Tim Jennings	CB	Chicago
Ryan Lilja	G	Kansas City
Jim Sorgi	QB	N.Y. Giants
Matt Stover	K	Free agent

The Colts raised eyebrows with the release of Lilja and then Brock, who asked to be let go, essentially walking away from more than $3 million. That's a lot for a guy who was nothing more than a play-eater. Jackson, a former first-round pick, tore up both knees the past two seasons. The Colts rationalized he wasn't worth the risk. But the Colts did take a chance on Terry, a former second-round pick who missed last season with a knee injury and could never stay healthy in Baltimore. The expected return of Adam Vinatieri made Stover expendable.

SPECIALISTS Punter Pat McAfee is a keeper for both his booming punts and kickoffs. Inquiring minds wonder if Mr. Clutch, Adam Vinatieri, will be able to return to form as one of the best kickers in the game's history. Vinatieri, 37, missed most of last season with a knee injury. The return game has been a mess, so the use of a seventh-round pick on Indiana's Ray Fisher might seem like a cause for celebration. Part of the problem has been blocking, but the Colts hope that their new guy can just make a tackler or two miss now and then and return kicks with purpose. The last players to handle the job were too indecisive. ***GRADE: B***

FINAL ANALYSIS It's not a secret many in NFL nation are tired of the Colts and Manning. But unless this team suffers a spate of injuries at key positions, be prepared for another run. The Colts have so many tools, they can absorb painful setbacks and keep winning. If this team's stars could ever stay healthy, more people would acknowledge how impressive the Colts have been in the Manning era. They typically break the hearts of their fans in the playoffs, but getting there is certainly entertaining.

Chris Covatta

INDIANAPOLIS IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Jerry Hughes	DE	6-2	255	TCU
2. Pat Angerer	LB	6-0	235	Iowa
3. Kevin Thomas	CB	6-0	192	USC
4. Jacques McClendon	G	6-3	324	Tennessee
5. Brody Eldridge	TE	6-5	265	Oklahoma
7. Ricardo Mathews	DT	6-3	294	Cincinnati
7. Kavell Conner	LB	6-0	242	Clemson
7. Ray Fisher	RS/CB	5-9	185	Indiana

Hughes is cut from the same speed-rushing mold as Pro Bowl end Dwight Freeney. Both led the nation in sacks for a season in their college careers. Angerer is similar to middle linebacker Gary Brackett in terms of weight, high motor and quick feet. Angerer could be Brackett's eventual replacement. Thomas showed some ability to play bump-and-run, which the Colts are asking their corners to do. McClendon fits into a push for bigger, stronger blockers to bolster the running game. He benched 645 pounds in college. Eldridge is a blocking tight end who had just 13 receptions in his college career. Fisher could be the quality returner the Colts have lacked for years.

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2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18	Manning, Peyton	QB	6-5	230	12	Tennessee	D1-98	D1-Ind-98
7	Painter, Curtis	QB	6-4	230	1	Purdue	D6-09	D6-Ind-09
16	Willy, Drew	QB	6-3	217	1	Buffalo	FA-09	FA-Bal-09
RUNNING BACKS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
29	Addai, Joseph	RB	5-11	214	4	LSU	D1-06	D1-Ind-06
31	Brown, Donald	RB	5-10	210	1	Connecticut	D1-09	D1-Ind-09
32	Hart, Mike	RB	5-9	206	2	Michigan	D6c-08	D6c-Ind-08
45	Moore, Devin	RB	5-9	191	1	Wyoming	FA-10	FA-Sea-09
RECEIVERS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44	Clark, Dallas	TE	6-3	252	7	Iowa	D1-03	D1-Ind-03
46	Cloherty, Colin	TE	6-2	245	1	Brown	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
17	Collie, Austin	WR	6-0	200	1	BYU	D4a-09	D4a-Ind-09
85	Garçon, Pierre	WR	6-0	210	2	Mount Union	D6d-08	D6d-Ind-08
14	Giguere, Sam	WR	5-11	215	1	Sherbrooke	FA-09	FA-Ind-08
11	Gonzalez, Anthony	WR	6-0	193	3	Ohio State	D1-07	D1-Ind-07
13	Guice, Dudley	WR	6-3	209	1	Northwestern State	FA-10	FA-Ten-09
81	Hall, Roy	WR	6-3	240	3	Ohio State	D5a-07	D5a-Ind-07
83	Matthews, John	WR	6-0	197	1	San Diego	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
80	Petrowski, Jamie	TE	6-4	262	1	Indiana State	FA-09	FA-Ten-06
47	Robinson, Gijon	TE	6-1	255	2	Missouri Western St.	FA-08	FA-Ind-07
86	Santi, Tom	TE	6-3	250	2	Virginia	D6a-08	D6a-Ind-08
10	Smith, Taj	WR	6-0	192	1	Syracuse	FA-09	FA-GB-08
48	Snow, Justin	TE	6-3	240	10	Baylor	FA-00	FA-Ind-00
84	Tamme, Jacob	TE	6-3	236	2	Kentucky	D4-08	D4-Ind-08
87	Wayne, Reggie	WR	6-0	198	9	Miami	D1b-01	D1b-Ind-01
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
62	Alleman, Andy	G	6-4	310	3	Akron	FA-KC-10	D3-NO-07
76	Cadogan, Gerald	T	6-5	314	1	Penn State	FA-10	FA-Car-09
66	DeVan, Kyle	G	6-2	306	1	Oregon State	FA-09	FA-Was-08
71	Diem, Ryan	T	6-6	320	9	Northern Illinois	D4-01	D4-Ind-01
74	Johnson, Charlie	T	6-4	305	4	Oklahoma State	D6a-06	D6a-Ind-06
78	Pollak, Mike	G	6-3	301	2	Arizona State	D2-08	D2-Ind-08
61	Richard, Jamey	G	6-5	295	2	Buffalo	D7-08	D7-Ind-08
63	Saturday, Jeff	C	6-2	295	11	North Carolina	FA-99	FA-Bal-98
79	Terry, Adam	T	6-8	335	5	Syracuse	FA-Bal-10	D2b-Bal-05
73	Thomas, Jaimie	G	6-4	330	1	Maryland	D7b-09	D7b-Ind-09
67	Ugoh, Tony	T	6-5	301	3	Arkansas	D2a-07	D2a-Ind-07
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
94	Baldwin, Ervin	DE	6-2	260	2	Michigan State	FA-09	D7-Chi-08
97	Chick, John	DE	6-4	248	1	Utah State	FA-10	FA-Hou-06
96	Dawson, Keyunta	DE	6-3	254	3	Texas Tech	D7-07	D7-Ind-07
68	Foster, Eric	DT	6-2	265	2	Rutgers	FA-08	FA-Ind-08
93	Freeney, Dwight	DE	6-1	268	8	Syracuse	D1-02	D1-Ind-02
69	Gill, John	DT	6-3	302	1	Northwestern	FA-09	FA-Det-09
97	Hardie, Rudolph	DE	6-2	270	1	Howard	FA-09	FA-Det-08
99	Johnson, Antonio	DT	6-3	310	3	Mississippi State	FA-08	D5-Ten-07
75	King, Mitch	DT	6-2	280	1	Iowa	FA-10	FA-Ten-09
98	Mathis, Robert	DE	6-2	245	7	Alabama A&M	D5a-03	D5a-Ind-03
95	Moala, Fili	DT	6-4	303	1	USC	D2a-09	D2a-Ind-09
90	Muir, Daniel	DT	6-2	312	3	Kent State	W-GB-08	FA-GB-07
72	Skolnitsky, J.D.	DE	6-5	255	1	James Madison	FA-Was-10	FA-Was-09
LINEBACKERS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
58	Brackett, Gary	LB	5-11	235	7	Rutgers	FA-03	FA-Ind-03
52	Glenn, Cody	LB	6-0	240	1	Nebraska	FA-09	D5-Was-09
59	Humber, Ramon	LB	5-11	232	1	North Dakota State	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
57	Renkart, Brandon	LB	6-2	245	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-NYJ-08
55	Session, Clint	LB	6-0	235	3	Pittsburgh	D4c-07	D4c-Ind-07
50	Wheeler, Philip	LB	6-2	240	2	Georgia Tech	D3-08	D3-Ind-08
DEFENSIVE BACKS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
41	Bethea, Antoine	DB	5-11	203	4	Howard	D6b-06	D6b-Ind-06
33	Bullitt, Melvin	DB	6-1	201	3	Texas A&M	FA-07	FA-Ind-07
43	Francisco, Aaron	DB	6-2	207	5	BYU	W-Ari-09	FA-Ari-05
26	Hayden, Kelvin	DB	6-0	195	5	Illinois	D2-05	D2-Ind-05
27	Lacey, Jacob	DB	5-10	177	1	Oklahoma State	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
25	Powers, Jerraud	DB	5-10	192	1	Auburn	D3-09	D3-Ind-09
21	Sanders, Bob	DB	5-8	206	6	Iowa	D2b-04	D2b-Ind-04
40	Silva, Jamie	DB	5-11	204	2	Boston College	FA-08	FA-Ind-08
SPECIALISTS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
1	McAfee, Pat	P	6-1	220	1	West Virginia	D7a-09	D7a-Ind-09
4	Vinatieri, Adam	K	6-0	202	14	South Dakota State	FA-NE-06	FA-NE-96

Scott Miller/US Presswire

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	87	Reggie Wayne
	85	Pierre Garçon
WR	11	Anthony Gonzalez
	17	Austin Collie
LT	74	Charlie Johnson
	67	Tony Ugoh
LG	62	Andy Alleman
	73	Jaimie Thomas
C	63	Jeff Saturday
	61	Jamey Richard
RG	78	Mike Pollak
	66	Kyle DeVan
RT	71	Ryan Diem
	79	Adam Terry
TE	44	Dallas Clark
	84	Jacob Tamme
TE	47	Gijon Robinson
	81	Brody Eldridge (R)
QB	18	Peyton Manning
	7	Curtis Painter
RB	29	Joseph Addai
	31	Donald Brown

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LE	98	Robert Mathis
	96	Keyunta Dawson
LT	99	Antonio Johnson
	68	Eric Foster
RT	90	Dan Muir
	95	Fili Moala
RE	93	Dwight Freeney
	92	Jerry Hughes (R)
SLB	50	Philip Wheeler
	52	Cody Glenn
MLB	58	Gary Brackett
	51	Pat Angerer (R)
WLB	55	Clint Session
	59	Ramon Humber
CB	26	Kelvin Hayden
	27	Jacob Lacey
CB	25	Jerraud Powers
	20	Kevin Thomas (R)
SS	21	Bob Sanders
	33	Melvin Bullitt
FS	41	Antoine Bethea
	40	Jamie Silva

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Adam Vinatieri
KR	14	Sam Giguere
P	1	Pat McAfee
PR	28	Ray Fisher (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Jim Caldwell
Offensive Coordinator: Clyde Christensen
Defensive Coordinator: Larry Coyer
Special Teams Coordinator: Ray Rychleski
Quarterbacks: Frank Reich
Running Backs: Gene Huey
Wide Receivers: Ron Turner
Tight Ends: Ricky Thomas
Offensive Line: Pete Metzelaars
Asst. Offensive Line: Ron Prince
Sr. Offensive Asst.: Tom Moore
Defensive Line: John Teerlinck
Linebackers: Mike Murphy
Special Asst. to the Defense: Rod Perry
Defensive Backs: Alan Williams
Defensive Assistant Coach: Bill Teerlinck
Strength and Conditioning: Jon Torine
Assistant Strength Coach: Richard Howell

FANTASY FLASH

Reggie Wayne and **Dallas Clark** became only the fourth pair of teammates in NFL history to catch 100 balls each in the same season a year ago. Clark is the first tight end to be part of such a duo. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

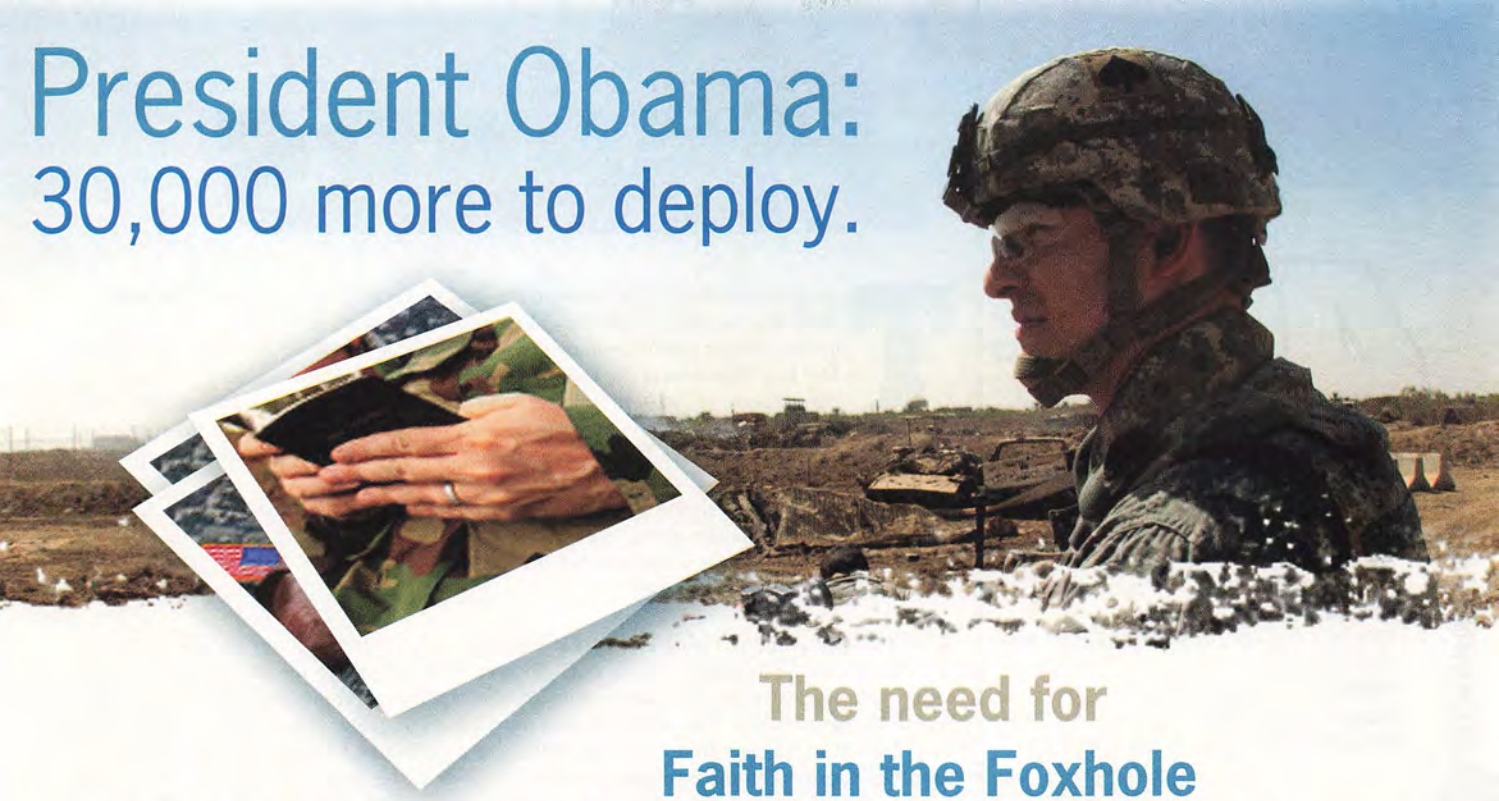
2009 RESULTS *(14–2)*

Sept. 13	Jacksonville	W	14–12
Sept. 21	at Miami	W	27–23
Sept. 27	at Arizona	W	31–10
Oct. 4	Seattle	W	34–17
Oct. 11	at Tennessee	W	31– 9
Oct. 25	at St. Louis	W	42– 6
Nov. 1	San Francisco	W	18–14
Nov. 8	Houston	W	20–17
Nov. 15	New England	W	35–34
Nov. 22	at Baltimore	W	17–15
Nov. 29	at Houston	W	35–27
Dec. 6	Tennessee	W	27–17
Dec. 13	Denver	W	28–16
Dec. 17	at Jacksonville	W	35–31
Dec. 27	N.Y. Jets	L	15–29
Jan. 3	at Buffalo	L	7–30
Postseason			
Jan. 16	Baltimore	W	20– 3
Jan. 24	N.Y. Jets	W	30–17
Feb. 7	New Orleans	L	17–31

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Houston	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	N.Y. Giants	8:20 pm
Sept. 26	at Denver	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	at Jacksonville	4:05 pm
Oct. 10	Kansas City	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at Washington	8:20 pm
Week 7	BYE	
Nov. 1	Houston (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 7	at Philadelphia	4:15 pm
Nov. 14	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at New England	4:15 pm
Nov. 28	San Diego	8:20 pm
Dec. 5	Dallas	4:15 pm
Dec. 9	at Tennessee (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 19	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Oakland	4:05 pm
Jan. 2	Tennessee	1:00 pm

President Obama:
30,000 more to deploy.



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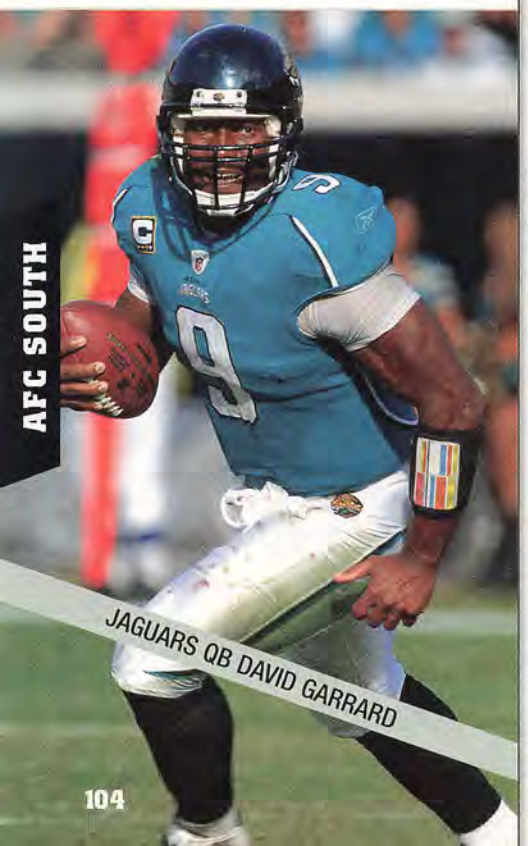
Five-Year Win Trend

2005	12	PLAYOFFS
2006	8	
2007	11	PLAYOFFS
2008	5	
2009	7	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



JAGUARS QB DAVID GARRARD

Garrard, Jones-Drew: Mark Langello

Things are heating up in Jacksonville, and it has nothing to do with the weather. After the Jaguars' late-season collapse in 2009, when the team lost its final four games to lose a playoff spot, owner Wayne Weaver turned up the heat on coach Jack Del Rio. Weaver said the team has been "average" too long and that he expected a playoff berth in 2010. In fact, Del Rio's record after seven years is an average 57–55. Del Rio jumped on the bandwagon and said he, too, will settle for nothing less than the playoffs. He then called quarterback David Garrard a "middle-tier" quarterback but said he plans to stick with him.

With the trickle-down theory in full force, Garrard, who has, in fact, been average since the 2007 season, told a reporter during the offseason he was "feeling the heat under my pants" to produce. But if the defense, which was below average, doesn't improve, Garrard probably won't make much of a difference anyway.

COACHES Entering his eighth season, Del Rio says he has never been one to "dig in the batter's box thinking I'm going to strike out." Weaver, however, gets to throw the last pitch. The team made aggressive decisions last year to rebuild rapidly and wound up with 33 new players, 16 of them rookies. Five of the rookies started the last game. The youngsters' experience should be of some comfort to Del Rio. Offensive coordinator Dirk Koetter is under orders from Del Rio to open up an offense that ranked 24th in the league in scoring. Del Rio told Koetter to quit running the ball up the middle so much. Defensive coordinator Mel Tucker enters his second season since coming from Cleveland and can't be blamed for the defense's weak showing a year ago. Del Rio took a more hands-on approach, trying to retool the defense and relegating Tucker to the secondary. The defense couldn't find an identity early and swung between a 3-4 and 4-3 before Del Rio settled on the latter. There was no pass rush to speak of (the Jaguars were last in the league in sacks with 14), the linebackers other than Daryl Smith were inconsistent, and the secondary was hammered by injuries. With Del Rio under pressure to produce, look for him to continue to take an active role in trying to fix what ails the defense. Tucker might have more input than he did at the end of last season, but Del Rio still figures to call the shots. ***GRADE: C***

QUARTERBACKS Del Rio insists he will stick by Garrard, saying he made that decision "a few years ago." This season will determine whether that was a good decision. One Jaguar official is more blunt, saying, "It's a defining year for Garrard." The veteran from East Carolina has kept his completion percentage over 60 percent in each of the past four seasons, but over the last two years he has a less-than-stellar 30-to-23 touchdown-to-interception ratio. And he isn't producing in the stat that matters the most — winning. He went 19–11 in his first 30 career starts but is 12–20 since with a 5–11 mark in 2008 and a 7–9 record in '09. Although Garrard appears to be entrenched in the starter's role, backup Luke McCown could get a strong look if the situation starts going too far south. McCown has starting experience and has an arm that's as strong, or stronger, than Garrard's. ***GRADE: C***

RUNNING BACKS Pro Bowler Maurice Jones-Drew returns as the feature back, which makes this position the most solid on the team. In his first year post-Fred Taylor, Jones-Drew rushed for 1,391 yards and scored 16 touchdowns. In addition, the team is very high on second-year player Rashad Jennings, who struggled early as a rookie but emerged as the complementary back late in the season. In fact, he was one of the few Jaguars who showed improvement during the late-season debacle, gaining trust and confidence from teammates. For the season, he gained 202 yards on 39 attempts for a more-than-respectable 5.2 yards-per-carry average. Fullback Greg Jones doesn't get many carries — he has a total of six rushing attempts for 36 yards over that last two seasons — but is a bruising hitter who serves as a strong lead blocker. ***GRADE: A***

RECEIVERS The oft-maligned Jaguars' receiving corps is starting to come together. Wide receiver Mike Sims-Walker stayed injury-free most of last season and started tapping the potential the team saw when it drafted him three years ago. Troy Williamson, maybe the fastest player on the team, is coming off a shoulder injury that ended his season early. His speed should be a good complement to Sims-Walker. Second-year receiver Mike Thomas will continue to see plenty of time at receiver and kick returner because coaches consider him one of their few legitimate gamebreaking threats. Tight end Marcedes Lewis has taken huge steps to improve his receiving skills and emerged as a strong leader in the locker room. Lewis might be the most underrated tight end in the league. Second-year player Zach Miller has completed the switch

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Feeling Blessed One of the critical factors the Jaguars use in evaluating players is character. Defensive end Tyson Alualu, the team's first-round draft pick in April, would seem to pass. After his selection he called reporters from a reception at his church in Hawaii.

Not Much Yellow The Jags were flagged for only 70 penalties last season, fewest in franchise history.

Out of Gas The Jaguars are a combined 2–8 in December and January over the past two seasons. Last year was a complete disaster as they went 0–4 when they still controlled their chances of making the playoffs. This season they finish with Washington and Oakland at home and Tennessee, Indianapolis and Houston on the road.

Give Them Time The Jags' draft selections caused an uproar among fans in Jacksonville, but general manager Gene Smith deserves the benefit of the doubt after getting plenty of contributions from last year's rookie class. The Jags drafted nine players a year ago, and all nine stayed on the roster all season. They also used seven undrafted rookies. In all, rookies combined for 71 starts.

2009 STATS

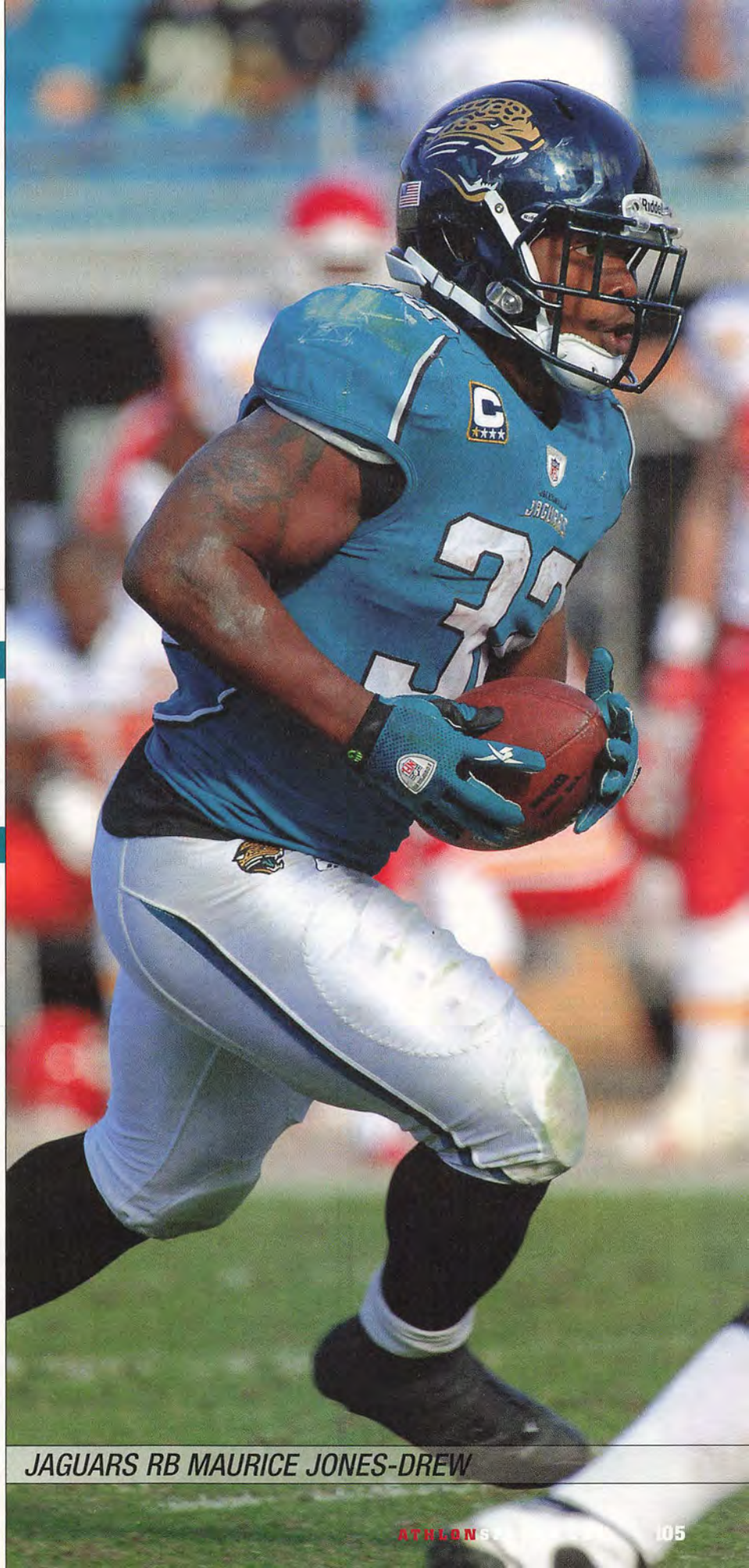
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	336.6	18	10
Rushing	126.8	10	7
Passing	209.8	19	8
Scoring	18.1	24	13
Punt Returns	8.6	14	7
Kick Returns	22.6	T16	T9
Red Zone TD %	51.1	17	8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	352.3	23	12
Rushing	116.4	19	9
Passing	235.9	27	14
Scoring	23.8	24	13
Interceptions	15	T16	T9
Sacks	14	32	16
Turnover Differential	+2	T13	T6

SCOUTING THE JAGUARS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP JACKSONVILLE

"The biggest thing with David Garrard is his consistency game in and game out. When he can hand the ball off and make plays with his legs, he's at his best. When you force him to throw the ball down the field, he has struggled. … Jacksonville's draft was a bit of a head-scratcher — first four picks on defensive linemen. They signed Aaron Kampman in the offseason to a big contract. He's a very good player and tremendous leader with a great work ethic. With only six picks in the draft, that's a whole lot of emphasis on the defensive line. … Tyson Alualu, I think, was a great pick for them. A lot of people seemed to knock it as a reach, but Jacksonville needs a starter who will make an impact. … Maurice Jones-Drew is a one-man wrecking crew, a real star in the league, but we've seen a trend in the league in the last 10 years: You need two backs in the backfield, 350-plus touches a year. That's a lot of wear and tear for anyone."



JAGUARS RB MAURICE JONES-DREW

from college quarterback (at Nebraska-Omaha) to tight end, and he made a real impact toward the end of the season. Expect Miller to see much more playing time this year, spelling Lewis and in two-tight end sets. ***GRADE: C***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Tackles Eugene Monroe (left) and Eben Britton (right) are back and ready to build on their baptism by fire as rookie starters a year ago. Still not a finished product, Britton was better than Monroe from start to finish and by the end of the season had seen time at all five offensive line positions. Monroe took his licks early and came on strong toward the end of the year. He already is among the best pulling tackles in the league. The Jags do a lot of cross training on the line, and it could serve them well this season. While the line as a whole is showing improvement, the middle still is a concern. Guard Uche Nwaneri could be called upon to spell aging center Brad Meester, who struggled at times last year. Guard Vince Manuwai now is a full season away from his knee injury and should have more of an impact this time around. The key for the line this season is improving its woeful pass-blocking. Garrard was sacked or knocked down more than 100 times last year, the most in the league. One of these times, he won't get up. ***GRADE: D***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Jaguars will argue they were getting to, and running by, the quarterback, but there's no denying their pass rush was abysmal throughout the 2009 season. They recorded the fifth-worst sack total in NFL history, and that lack of pressure put the squeeze on the rest of the defense. Del Rio is intent on returning the defense "to its roots" and started by blowing up the front line. His first move was signing free agent Aaron Kampman from Green Bay. Kampman was out of sorts as an outside linebacker in the Packers' new 3-4 defense last season, but the Jaguars expect him to rediscover his pass-rush prowess at his natural end spot in the 4-3 — if he is recovered from knee surgery. He played only nine games last season. The Jags also sent unproductive end Quentin Groves to Oakland and released tackle John Henderson, but their biggest moves were in the draft, where they used their first four picks on defensive linemen. The local folks were hoping quarterback Tim Tebow would come home, but the Jags spent their first-round pick on defensive tackle Tyson Alualu from California. Don't be surprised if he quickly becomes a starter alongside second-year player Terrance "Pot Roast" Knighton. Knighton, out of Temple, is a presence in the middle, especially against the run, and a Pro Bowl isn't out of the question if he polishes his pass-rush skills. ***GRADE: D***

LINEBACKERS The Jags averted a potential problem at this underachieving position when they sent a fourth-round draft pick to Oakland for starter Kirk Morrison. Beyond Morrison and Smith, who recorded 107 tackles last season, there are questions. Russell Allen, an undrafted free agent, acquitted himself well last season, and it won't be a surprise if he winds up starting full-time, but he's in only his second year. Justin Durant moved to the middle last year with so-so results, but Morrison will assume that role, allowing Durant to move back outside. ***GRADE: B-***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Cornerback is set with second-year player Derek Cox and Rashean Mathis back. Cox still plays like a youngster but got noticeably better as last season wore on. Mathis suffered a serious groin injury, but he is healed and should be as steady as always. Safety is more of a question. The position was a revolving door because of injuries, and the deep backs are suspect because of the play of Reggie Nelson, who seems to have forgotten how to tackle. The team is sticking with Nelson because of his athletic ability, but he'll have to improve a lot to maintain a starting job. Gerald Alexander, Anthony Smith and Sean Considine all showed flashes last season, but all missed time with dings, too. ***GRADE: C***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM
Aaron Kampman	DE	Green Bay	Quentin Groves	DE	Oakland
Kirk Morrison	LB	Oakland	John Henderson	DT	Free agent
Kassim Osgood	WR	San Diego	Torry Holt	WR	New England
			Clint Ingram	LB	Free agent
			Brian Iwuh	LB	Free agent
			Tra Thomas	OT	Free agent

Kampman is coming off ACL surgery, and the Jaguars freely admit this was a high risk/high reward signing. The pass rush was so anemic last season, he's worth a try. Morrison gives the Jags a bona fide starter at what was becoming a questionable area. Cutting Holt might look like an eyebrow-raising move, but it was time. He no longer was able to turn 20-yard receptions into 80-yard gains. Groves had been on the ropes since the middle of last season. He never panned out as a pass-rusher, and the biggest surprise was that the Jaguars wrangled a fifth-round draft choice from Oakland.

SPECIALISTS Kicker Josh Scobee can be among the best in the league but needs to add some leg strength. He probably won't be asked to try as many long kicks this season. In his six-year career, all with Jacksonville, he has hit a little more than 75 percent of his attempts — not awful but not very good, either. Punter Adam Podlesh is steady and continues to improve on his angle kicks. The Jags have two of the top special teams players in the league. Unheralded Montell Owens easily could have made the Pro Bowl last season but lost out to Kassim Osgood, whom the Jags acquired in free agency. Thomas is expected to be the primary return man on both punts and kickoffs. ***GRADE: B+***

FINAL ANALYSIS The Jaguars' arrow is pointing up, but they still have a ways to go. They've finished last in the AFC South the past two years. Weaver has laid out his expectations — he expects to see his team in the postseason — and if they aren't met, Del Rio likely won't be around for a ninth season. A wild card playoff berth is a reasonable goal, but improvement is needed on both sides of the ball. Garrard must rediscover his 2007 form and the line must start blocking for him. And the offseason moves on defense must translate to more pressure on opposing quarterbacks.

Peter Brouillet

JACKSONVILLE IN THE DRAFT

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Tyson Alualu	DT	6-3	294	California
3	D'Anthony Smith	DT	6-2	298	Louisiana Tech
5	Larry Hart	DE	6-0	248	Central Arkansas
5	Austen Lane	DE	6-5	274	Murray State
6	Deji Karim	RB	5-8	209	Southern Illinois
6	Scotty McGee	KR	5-8	182	James Madison

The Jags needed to rebuild their defense and believe that process begins up front, so the first four picks were on the defensive line. They insist Alualu was not a stretch with their top pick, and there's a good chance he'll wind up starting. The stretch might be with Smith, who is strong but has a reputation of being an underachiever. Hart and Lane will have to wait their turns behind Aaron Kampman and Derrick Harvey. But if Harvey doesn't pick up the pace, either Hart or Lane could be forced into duty.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Garrard, David	QB	6-1	236	8	East Carolina	D4-02	D4-Jac-02
12 McCown, Luke	QB	6-4	217	6	Louisiana Tech	T-TB-09	D4-Cle-04
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44 Bolen, Brock	FB	6-0	233	1	Louisville	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
23 Jennings, Rashad	RB	6-1	235	1	Liberty	D7a-09	D7a-Jac-09
33 Jones, Greg	RB	6-1	254	6	Florida State	D2b-04	D2b-Jac-04
32 Jones-Drew, Maurice	RB	5-7	208	4	UCLA	D2-06	D2-Jac-06
24 Owens, Montell	FB	5-10	225	4	Maine	FA-06	FA-Jac-06
34 Patrick, Allen	RB	6-1	200	1	Oklahoma	FA-09	D7-Bal-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
13 Denmark, Clarence	WR	5-11	185	1	Arkansas-Monticello	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
87 Dillard, Jarett	WR	5-10	187	1	Rice	D5-09	D5-Jac-09
16 Hughes, Nate	WR	6-2	195	1	Alcorn State	FA-08	FA-Cle-08
89 Lewis, Marcedes	TE	6-6	275	4	UCLA	D1-06	D1-Jac-06
86 Miller, Zach	TE	6-4	245	1	Nebraska-Omaha	D6-09	D6-Jac-09
81 Osgood, Kassim	WR	6-5	220	7	San Diego State	FA-SD-10	FA-SD-03
88 Potter, Zach	TE	6-7	280	1	Nebraska	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
11 Sims-Walker, Mike	WR	6-2	214	3	Central Florida	D3-07	D3-Jac-07
80 Thomas, Mike	WR	5-8	198	1	Arizona	D4-09	D4-Jac-09
19 Underwood, Tiquan	WR	6-1	178	1	Rutgers	D7b-09	D7b-Jac-09
85 Wilford, Ernest	TE	6-4	235	6	Virginia Tech	FA-09	D4-Jac-04
84 Williamson, Troy	WR	6-1	203	5	South Carolina	T-Min-08	D1-Min-05
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
78 Black, Jordan	T	6-5	305	6	Notre Dame	FA-08	D5-KC-03
73 Britton, Eben	T	6-6	310	1	Arizona	D2-09	D2-Jac-09
65 Forney, Kynan	G	6-3	302	9	Hawaii	FA-09	D7-Atl-01
67 Manuwai, Vince	G	6-2	333	7	Hawaii	D3-03	D3-Jac-03
79 McQuistan, Paul	OL	6-6	315	4	Weber State	FA-09	D3-Oak-06
63 Meester, Brad	C	6-3	311	10	Northern Iowa	D2-00	D2-Jac-00
75 Monroe, Eugene	T	6-5	320	1	Virginia	D1-09	D1-Jac-09
64 Newton, Cecil	C	6-2	310	1	Tennessee State	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
77 Nwaneri, Uche	G/C	6-3	329	3	Purdue	D5a-07	D5a-Jac-07
70 Stephenson, Cameron	G	6-3	326	1	Rutgers	PS-NO-08	D5-Pit-07
72 Thomas, Tra	T	6-7	316	12	Florida State	FA-Phi-09	D1-Phi-98
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
99 Ellison, Atiyyah	DL	6-3	322	2	Missouri	PS-SF-08	D3-Car-05
55 Harrington, Chris	DE	6-5	260	1	Texas A&M	PS-Ari-09	D6-Ari-08
91 Harvey, Derrick	DE	6-5	281	2	Florida	D1-08	D1-Jac-08
97 Hayward, Reggie	DE	6-5	275	9	Iowa State	FA-Den-05	D3-Den-01
74 Kampman, Aaron	DE	6-4	260	8	Iowa	FA-GB-10	D5a-GB-02
96 Knighton, Terrance	DT	6-3	325	1	Temple	D3a-09	D3a-Jac-09
92 Meier, Rob	DL	6-5	315	10	Washington State	D7b-00	D7b-Jac-00
94 Mincey, Jeremy	DE	6-3	270	4	Florida	FA-SF-07	D6-NE-06
94 Navarre, Jeremy	DE	6-3	279	1	Maryland	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
90 Williams, Julius	DE	6-2	260	1	Connecticut	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
50 Allen, Russell	LB	6-3	234	1	San Diego State	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
56 Durant, Justin	LB	6-1	240	3	Hampton	D2-07	D2-Jac-07
54 Keiaho, Freddy	LB	5-11	226	4	San Diego State	FA-Ind-10	D3-Ind-06
55 Morrison, Kirk	LB	6-2	240	5	San Diego State	T-Oak-10	D3-Oak-05
53 Smith, Bryan	LB	6-2	250	2	McNeese State	PS-StL-09	D3-Phi-08
52 Smith, Daryl	LB	6-2	249	6	Georgia Tech	D2a-04	D2a-Jac-04
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
42 Alexander, Gerald	S	6-2	204	3	Boise State	T-Det-09	D2-Det-07
41 Brackenridge, Tyron	DB	5-11	189	2	Washington State	W-NYJ-09	FA-KC-07
22 Carey, Don	DB	5-11	192	1	Norfolk State	W-Cle-09	D6-Cle-09
26 Coe, Michael	DB	6-0	190	3	Alabama State	PS-NYG-09	D5-Ind-07
37 Considine, Sean	S	6-0	212	5	Iowa	FA-Phi-09	D4-Phi-05
21 Cox, Derek	CB	6-1	190	1	William & Mary	D3b-09	D3b-Jac-09
36 Greene, Courtney	S	6-0	212	1	Rutgers	FA-09	D7-Sea-09
27 Mathis, Rashean	CB	6-1	193	7	Bethune-Cookman	D2-03	D2-Jac-03
29 Middleton, William	CB	5-11	194	1	Furman	PS-Atl-09	D5-Atl-09
25 Nelson, Reggie	S	5-11	202	3	Florida	D1-07	D1-Jac-07
20 Smith, Anthony	S	6-0	200	4	Syracuse	W-StL-09	D3-Pit-06
31 Starks, Scott	CB	5-9	178	5	Wisconsin	D3-05	D3-Jac-05
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
48 Cain, Jeremy	LS	6-1	245	3	Massachusetts	W-Was-09	FA-Chi-04
3 Podlesh, Adam	P	5-11	200	3	Maryland	D4a-07	D4a-Jac-07
10 Scobee, Josh	K	6-1	210	6	Louisiana Tech	D5a-04	D5a-Jac-04

Mark Langello

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	11	Mike Sims-Walker
	87	Jarett Dillard
WR	84	Troy Williamson
	80	Mike Thomas
LT	75	Eugene Monroe
	78	Jordan Black
LG	67	Vince Manuwai
	65	Kynan Forney
C	63	Brad Meester
	64	Cecil Newton
RG	77	Uche Nwaneri
	70	Cameron Stephenson
RT	73	Eben Britton
	78	Jordan Black
TE	89	Marcedes Lewis
	86	Zach Miller
QB	9	David Garrard
	12	Luke McCown
FB	33	Greg Jones
	24	Montell Owens
RB	32	Maurice Jones-Drew
	23	Rashad Jennings

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	91	Derrick Harvey
	94	Jeremy Mincey
DT	96	Terrance Knighton
	99	Atiyyah Ellison
DT	93	Tyson Alualu (R)
	95	D'Anthony Smith (R)
DE	74	Aaron Kampman
	97	Reggie Hayward
OLB	52	Daryl Smith
	50	Russell Allen
MLB	55	Kirk Morrison
	52	Daryl Smith
OLB	56	Justin Durant
	50	Russell Allen
CB	21	Rashean Mathis
	31	Scott Starks
CB	21	Derek Cox
	41	Tyron Brackenridge
S	42	Gerald Alexander
	37	Sean Considine
S	20	Anthony Smith
	25	Reggie Nelson

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Josh Scobee
KR	80	Mike Thomas
P	3	Adam Podlesh
PR	80	Mike Thomas

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Jack Del Rio
Offensive Coordinator: Dirk Koetter
Defensive Coordinator: Mel Tucker
Special Teams: Russ Purnell
Asst. Special Teams: Nate Kaczor
Quarterbacks: Mike Shula
Running Backs: Earnest Byner
Wide Receivers: Todd Monken
Tight Ends: Rob Boras
Offensive Line: Andy Heck
Offensive Assistant: Matt Griffin
Offensive Assistant: Ron Heller
Defensive Line: Joe Cullen
Asst. Defensive Line: Ben Albert
Linebackers: Mark Duffner
Defensive Backs: Cory Undlin
Asst. Defensive Backs: Thom Kaumeyer
Offensive Quality Control: Johnny Cox
Strength and Conditioning: Luke Richesson
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Jason George

FANTASY FLASH

Mike Sims-Walker became Jacksonville's fifth different leading receiver (by number of receptions) in the last five seasons, hauling in 63 balls for 869 yards and seven scores in 15 games. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(7–9)*

Sept. 13	at Indianapolis		L	12–14
Sept. 20	Arizona		L	17–31
Sept. 27	at Houston		W	31–24
Oct. 4	Tennessee		W	37–17
Oct. 11	at Seattle		L	0–41
Oct. 18	St. Louis	(ot)	W	23–20
Nov. 1	at Tennessee		L	13–30
Nov. 8	Kansas City		W	24–21
Nov. 15	at N.Y. Jets		W	24–22
Nov. 22	Buffalo		W	18–15
Nov. 29	at San Francisco		L	3–20
Dec. 6	Houston		W	23–18
Dec. 13	Miami		L	10–14
Dec. 17	Indianapolis		L	31–35
Dec. 27	at New England		L	7–35
Jan. 3	at Cleveland		L	17–23

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Denver	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at San Diego	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	Philadelphia	4:05 pm
Oct. 3	Indianapolis	4:05 pm
Oct. 10	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Oct. 18	Tennessee (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 24	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at Dallas	1:00 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 14	Houston	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	Oakland	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Indianapolis	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Washington	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at Houston	1:00 pm

tennessee TITANS

3 AFC SOUTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: K.S. "Bud" Adams Jr.
GENERAL MANAGER: Mike Reinfeldt
STADIUM: LP Field (68,798)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.titansonline.com
TICKETS: 615-565-4200
TRAINING CAMP: Baptist Sports Park (Nashville, Tenn.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	4	
2006	8	
2007	10	PLAYOFFS
2008	13	PLAYOFFS
2009	8	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs

TITANS QB VINCE YOUNG

Which personality best represents the Titans — the team that struggled to six consecutive losses to start last season, or the squad led by a resurrected quarterback that made a run at the AFC playoffs before finishing at 8–8? This fall will go a long way toward determining whether the team that finished last season strong was the real deal.

The offense is intact, including Chris Johnson, who is coming off a season in which he rushed for 2,006 yards. Quarterback Vince Young gets to show what he can do after a full offseason of preparation as a No. 1 quarterback.

The defense is another issue. The unit could return to its former greatness, thanks to a defensive-heavy draft, healed injuries and improved returning players. Or, many of the problems that haunted the 28th-ranked defense last season could reappear.

Put it all together and if things fall right, the Titans look like an AFC wild card team. If they don't, Jeff Fisher & Co. will be watching the playoffs on TV again.

COACHES Entering his 17th season, Fisher is the longest-tenured NFL head coach in the NFL, but he needs a solid season to satisfy his community of fans. An early playoff exit in 2008 and last season's roller-coaster performances have made some second-guess his overall coaching résumé. But Fisher is a fiery coach who gets his troops to play hard. Offensive coordinator Mike Heimerdinger will be surrounded by the same offense as last season. The difference? He's had all offseason to work with Young, who became a starter midway through 2009 and directed the Titans' post-bye week revival. Unlike Heimerdinger, second-year defensive coordinator Chuck Cecil has as much to prove in 2010 as the struggling unit he coached last season. The Titans drafted six players on defense, most notably end Derrick Morgan, in an effort to give Cecil more quality pieces to work with. **GRADE: B-**

QUARTERBACKS Young surprised — even shocked — most of the NFL with his superb performance last season after he took over for Kerry Collins. After going winless under Collins, Tennessee went 8–2 under Young, whose career record as a starter improved to 26–13. Young now enters the 2010 season as the team's undisputed starting quarterback. Expect Young, now in his fifth season, to add more timing routes to his basket of throws. Also, expect Young to handle this season's ups and downs better than he did earlier in his career. Even if he struggles early, his patience level has improved, which should allow him to adjust more easily. Collins enters 2010 as a well-paid backup with starting experience, but he might not survive training camp. Chris Simms was signed from Denver this offseason, and the former starter in Tampa Bay is a capable No. 2. **GRADE: B**

RUNNING BACKS The Titans have a very fortunate problem at this position. All they have to do is figure out how much the offense should rest on Johnson's speedy and sturdy legs. A year ago, Johnson became the sixth running back in NFL history to reach the 2,000-yard plateau. He also caught 50 passes for 503 yards to give him 2,509 yards from scrimmage, an NFL record. And Johnson, never short on confidence, wants to do it again. The Titans, of course, would like Johnson to be productive for many years to come, so they'll ponder ways to make sure they don't wear out their dazzling runner with an excessive workload. The Titans will no longer have a Smash 'N' Dash tandem following the draft-day trade of LenDale White to the Seahawks, but that doesn't mean Johnson will get all the carries at the goal line. Several backs are vying to help Johnson shoulder the load, including second-year pro Javon Ringer, who didn't see much action a year ago but does have a year's experience in the system. He will have to fend off challenges from undrafted rookies Stafon Johnson, who suffered a near-fatal weightlifting accident last fall at USC, and LeGarrette Blount, whose senior season at Oregon was marred by "The Punch" in the opener at Boise State. **GRADE: A+**

RECEIVERS Kenny Britt is looking to build on a rookie season in which he led Tennessee with 701 yards receiving on 42 catches. He will be an even tougher receiver to defend if he gets in and out of his routes faster and continues to bully smaller defensive backs for position. Justin Gage has been a top receiving option for the Titans when healthy, but he missed four games last season with a back injury. At 6'4", he is a good red zone target who contributes yards after the catch. Nate Washington will try to do a better job of utilizing the speed he brought from Pittsburgh before last season. He did finish with a team-high six touchdown catches, but he morphed into a possession receiver and had trouble with his hands, issues he has addressed this offseason. Rookie Damian Williams could emerge as a third-round steal from USC. At tight end, second-year pro Jared Cook needs to improve his blocking and master the playbook to

Young, Johnson: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Check the Time Titans free safety Michael Griffin wears a digital watch during practice, a habit that dates back to college. "I'm the time guy," Griffin says. "Guys are always asking me, 'How much time is left in practice?'"

Snubbing the Eagles Derrick Morgan, the Titans' first-round draft pick, grew up a 49ers fan despite living in Coatesville, Pa. Why? He admired Steve Young and Jerry Rice.

More Blocks, Fewer Yards Fullback Ahmard Hall has 17 carries for 55 yards in his four-year NFL career. Chris Johnson, whom he blocks for, bettered Hall's career rushing total in all but one game last season.

Locker Room Living During 2009 training camp, Nate Washington utilized his locker as a place to take naps, covering the opening with a large towel and climbing inside. The offensive linemen share a flat screen TV, which often plays "Family Guy" episodes on DVD. Want to hear the latest hip-hop? Stop by Chris Johnson's space. Actually, you should be able to hear it from anywhere in the locker room.

2009 STATS

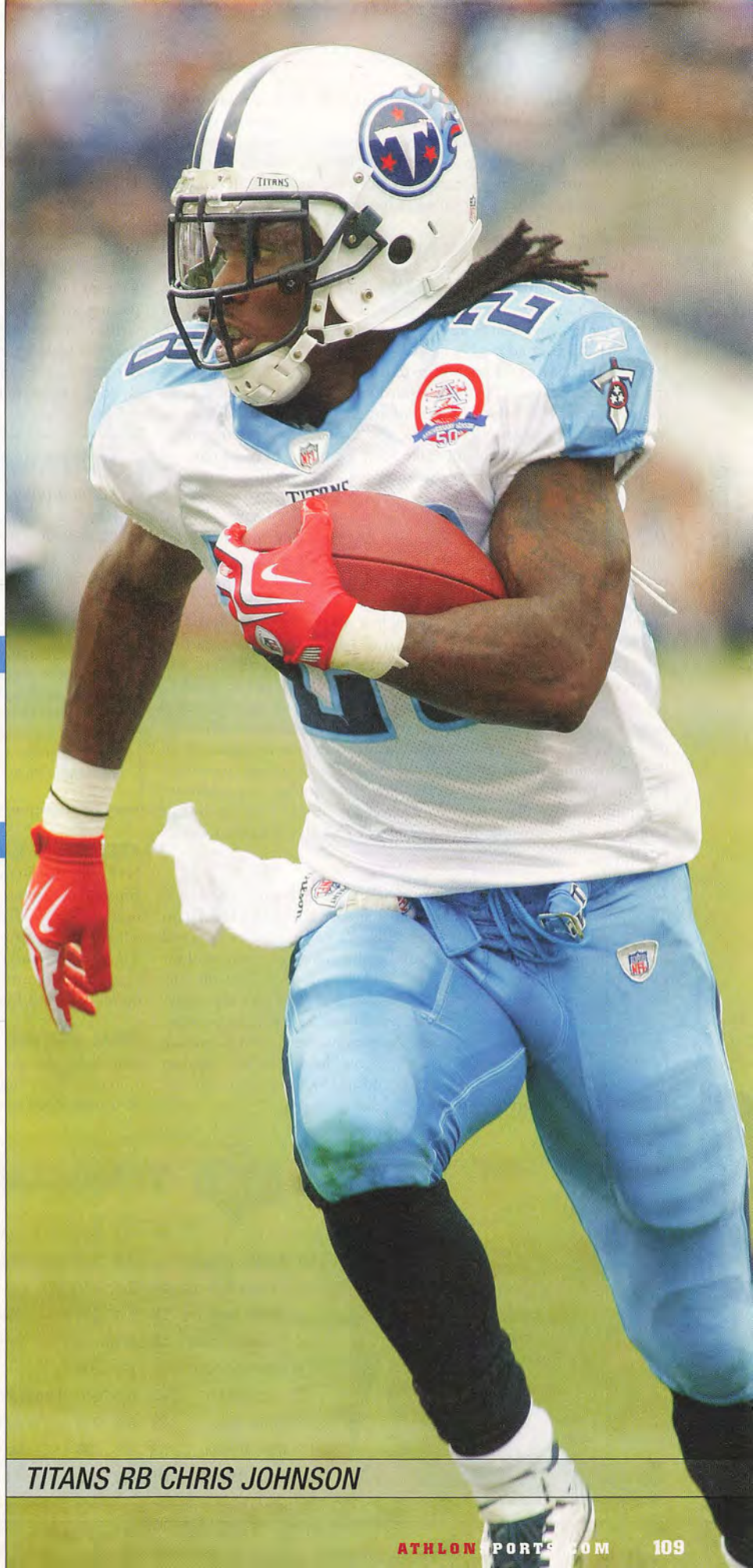
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	351.4	12	6
Rushing	162.0	2	2
Passing	189.4	23	10
Scoring	22.1	16	8
Punt Returns	6.7	25	12
Kick Returns	20.5	T29	15
Red Zone TD %	56.4	8	3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	365.6	28	14
Rushing	106.9	T10	T5
Passing	258.7	31	16
Scoring	25.1	28	15
Interceptions	20	8	3
Sacks	32	T18	T9
Turnover Differential	-4	21	13

SCOUTING THE TITANS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP TENNESSEE

"Chris Johnson is a home run hitter. He can take it the distance from anywhere on the field. ... Down the stretch they carefully scripted the throws Vince Young had to make. Keep it short and keep it outside, hit your check-off man in Johnson. Can he pick up where he left off last year? ... We'll have to see if they are starting over again at the quarterback position, or if the time off has helped Vince groom his ability to not only play the position, but lead the team. ... Kenny Britt really came on last year and looks like he has Pro Bowl talent. ... They have a very good offensive line and tight ends. ... I think they'll miss Kyle Vanden Bosch. He's a whale of a player. He was the engine that drove the defensive line. After losing Albert Haynesworth the year before, you can't replace those two guys. ... In the draft, they went four of their first five picks on defense. That will certainly make them better on that side of the ball. They picked up a defensive end that will start and help them immediately in Derrick Morgan."



TITANS RB CHRIS JOHNSON

increase his chances of getting on the field. If he does, he could push starter Bo Scaife, a college teammate and favorite target of Young's. Cook has an edge with a higher level of speed and reach — at 6'5", he looks like a tall receiver — but Scaife has the bulk to catch and block, the latter a big requirement for this offense. Craig Stevens also will contribute as essentially an extra lineman. **GRADE: C**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN When a running back gains 2,000 yards and the quarterbacks get sacked only 15 times all season (two more than league leader Indianapolis), the offensive line is doing something right. This is the most consistent unit on the team, a fact that should not change with Leroy Harris taking over for Kevin Mawae at center. Harris has filled in admirably at various positions in the past, and his move to the starting lineup will require someone to take his place as the versatile backup — perhaps Ryan Durand or Troy Kropog, both second-year players. Michael Roos doesn't get the attention he deserves as one of the league's top left tackles, and David Stewart is an imposing presence at right tackle, too. Jake Scott is a model of consistency at right guard. Left guard Eugene Amano made strides in his second year as a starter. **GRADE: A+**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The free agent departure of former Pro Bowl end Kyle Vanden Bosch to Detroit opens a spot for Morgan, whom the Titans were happy to select in the first round of the draft. The Titans must improve their pass rush, and Morgan led the ACC last season with 12.5 sacks. He has a quick first step and a great motor and is stout against the run. He is expected to step directly into a starting role. With Morgan on one side, William Hayes and Jacob Ford will compete for the other starting job at end. They both utilize speed to get to quarterbacks and combined for 9.5 sacks a year ago. At tackle, Jason Jones must rebound from an injury-plagued season in which he played in just seven games. Jones is the team's best candidate to demand double-teams up front, allowing for one-on-one matchups for Tony Brown and others on the line. Brown supplies pressure up the middle. Jovan Haye must do a better job of crowding the line of scrimmage and allowing other defenders to finish off ball-carriers or reach quarterbacks. **GRADE: B-**

LINEBACKERS Starting outside linebackers Keith Bulluck and David Thornton finished the '09 season on injured reserve, and the Titans appear willing to move on, although either or both could be re-signed before the season. Gerald McRath and Colin Allred are ready to show they can step into starting jobs, and Will Witherspoon is in the mix after being signed from Philadelphia in free agency. That's three guys fighting for two jobs. Rennie Curran, a tackling machine from Georgia, was drafted in the third round, adding yet another option at outside linebacker. The only certain starter is middle linebacker Stephen Tulloch, who led the Titans in tackles and tackles for a loss in his second full year as a starter. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Massive improvement is needed in this area after the Titans ranked 31st in the league in pass defense, allowing 258.7 yards per game. One of the cornerback spots will be manned by 2008 Pro Bowler Cortland Finnegan, who had five interceptions a year ago. A slew of players will compete for the job opposite him. Injuries forced Ryan Mouton and Jason McCourty to be thrown into the fire as rookies and they struggled, but a year's experience puts them in better stead for this season. Free agent Tye Hill (Atlanta), veteran Rod Hood and rookie Alterraun Verner of UCLA will compete for time, while Vincent Fuller will likely remain the nickelback. Fuller plays on most passing and third downs. Behind them, Chris Hope and Michael Griffin are coming off average seasons as the starting safeties. Griffin needs to scale back on baiting quarterbacks for interceptions, a practice that last season caused him to struggle. Rookie Myron Rolle, a Rhodes scholar, figures to pick up the defense quickly. **GRADE: C-**

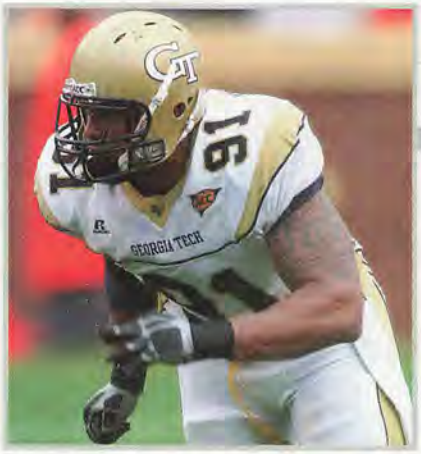
VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Jason Babin	DE	Philadelphia	Alge Crumpler	TE	New England
Tye Hill	CB	Atlanta	Craig Hentrich	P	Retired
Chris Simms	QB	Denver	Kevin Mawae	C	Free agent
Will Witherspoon	LB	Philadelphia	Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	Detroit
			LenDale White	RB	Seattle

The Titans did not go on an offseason spending frenzy. The guys they added are role players. Witherspoon and Hill will compete for starting jobs, making them the free agent signees most likely to make an impact in 2010. At best, Babin will be part of a defensive line rotation. Simms could bump Kerry Collins out of the No. 2 quarterback job. Vanden Bosch was snagged by former Titans defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz, now the Lions' head coach. His leadership will be missed. White's role in the offense slipped a lot in 2009.

SPECIALISTS Rob Bironas is one of the most solid kickers in the NFL, but the Titans signed free agent Ricky Schmitt, perhaps to keep Bironas on his toes. Punter Brett Kern showed a strong leg after taking over for Craig Hentrich, whose 2009 season ended after two games when he strained his calf. Hentrich officially retired in the offseason. The Titans' return game wasn't much in '09, and several players will get a shot at return jobs in training camp, including Williams and Britt on kickoffs and Mark Jones on punts. **GRADE: C+**

FINAL ANALYSIS If Tennessee's pass defense returns from its one-year sabbatical, the team has a chance to reach the playoffs, likely as a wild card in the rugged AFC South. And any team with Chris Johnson in the backfield has a chance to win every Sunday.



Paul Jasienski

TENNESSEE IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Derrick Morgan	DE	6-3	266	Georgia Tech
3. Damian Williams	WR	6-1	197	USC
3. Rennie Curran	LB	5-11	235	Georgia
4. Alterraun Verner	CB	5-10	189	UCLA
5. Robert Johnson	S	6-2	203	Utah
6. Rusty Smith	QB	6-5	230	Florida Atlantic
6. Myron Rolle	SS	6-2	215	Florida State
7. Marc Mariani	WR	6-1	190	Montana
7. David Howard	DT	6-3	298	Brown

The Titans utilized the 2010 draft to upgrade their defense, with four of their first five and six of nine selections overall on that side of the ball. Morgan will have the most immediate impact. He steps into a position vacated by former Pro Bowler Kyle Vanden Bosch and is renowned for his quick first step and production (19.5 sacks in his last two seasons at Georgia Tech). Williams brings exceptional skills to the wide receiver position and could help on offense this year, though he, Verner and Johnson will make their greatest contributions on special teams. Rolle could wind up being a steal in the sixth round. He didn't play football in '09 because he was studying at Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Collins, Kerry	QB	6-5	245	15	Penn State	FA-Oak-06	D1-Car-95
11 Simms, Chris	QB	6-4	230	7	Texas	FA-Den-10	D3-TB-03
10 Young, Vince	QB	6-5	233	4	Texas	D1-06	D1-Ten-06
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
45 Hall, Ahmard	FB	5-11	242	4	Texas	FA-06	FA-Ten-06
28 Johnson, Chris	RB	5-11	200	2	East Carolina	D1-08	D1-Ten-08
35 Pearman, Alvin	RB	5-10	204	4	Virginia	FA-09	D4-Jac-05
21 Ringer, Javon	RB	5-9	205	1	Michigan State	D5-09	D5-Ten-09
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
18 Britt, Kenny	WR	6-3	218	1	Rutgers	D1-09	D1-Ten-09
89 Cook, Jared	TE	6-5	246	1	South Carolina	D3a-09	D3a-Ten-09
19 Edison, Dominique	WR	6-2	204	1	Stephen F. Austin	D6b-09	D6b-Ten-09
12 Gage, Justin	WR	6-4	212	7	Missouri	FA-Chi-07	D5-Chi-03
87 Hawkins, Lavelle	WR	5-11	190	2	California	D4b-08	D4b-Ten-08
84 Jones, Mark	WR	5-9	185	6	Tennessee	FA-Car-09	D7-TB-04
16 Morris, Phillip	WR	6-3	175	1	South Carolina St.	FA-09	FA-Ten-09
80 Scaife, Bo	TE	6-3	249	5	Texas	D6-05	D6-Ten-05
88 Stevens, Craig	TE	6-3	255	2	California	D3-08	D3-Ten-08
85 Washington, Nate	WR	6-1	185	5	Tiffin	FA-Pit-09	FA-Pit-05
81 Williams, Paul	WR	6-1	205	3	Fresno State	D3-07	D3-Ten-07
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
54 Amano, Eugene	G/C	6-3	310	6	SE Missouri State	D7-04	D7-Ten-04
77 Durand, Ryan	G	6-5	305	1	Syracuse	D7a-09	D7a-Ten-09
64 Harris, Leroy	G/C	6-3	302	3	NC State	D4a-07	D4a-Ten-07
70 Kropog, Troy	T/G	6-6	309	1	Tulane	D4b-09	D4b-Ten-09
72 McCaskill, Nevin	T	6-4	300	1	Hampton	FA-09	FA-Buf-07
66 Otto, Mike	T	6-5	308	2	Purdue	D7-07	D7-Ten-07
71 Roos, Michael	T	6-7	315	5	Eastern Washington	D2-05	D2-Ten-05
73 Scott, Jake	G	6-5	295	6	Idaho	FA-Ind-08	D5-Ind-04
76 Stewart, David	T	6-7	318	5	Mississippi State	D4b-05	D4b-Ten-05
61 Velasco, Fernando	C/G	6-4	304	1	Georgia	FA-08	FA-Ten-08
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
93 Babin, Jason	DE	6-3	267	5	Western Michigan	FA-Phi-10	D1-Hou-04
99 Bakhtiari, Eric	DE	6-3	285	1	San Diego	FA-09	FA-SD-08
98 Ball, Dave	DE	6-5	277	5	UCLA	FA-08	D5-SD-04
79 Brown, Kareem	DE	6-4	260	2	Miami	FA-09	D4-NE-07
97 Brown, Tony	DT	6-3	290	5	Memphis	FA-06	FA-Car-03
78 Ford, Jacob	DE	6-4	256	3	Central Arkansas	D6b-07	D6b-Ten-07
75 Haye, Jovan	DT	6-2	285	5	Vanderbilt	FA-TB-09	D6-Car-05
95 Hayes, William	DE	6-3	272	2	Winston-Salem St.	D4a-08	D4a-Ten-08
90 Howard, Marcus	DE	6-0	237	1	Georgia	FA-09	D5-Ind-08
91 Jones, Jason	DT	6-5	280	2	Eastern Michigan	D2-08	D2-Ten-08
94 Marks, Sen'Derrick	DT	6-2	306	1	Auburn	D2-09	D2-Ten-09
92 Moore, Jay	DE	6-4	280	1	Nebraska	FA-09	D4-SF-07
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56 Allred, Colin	LB	6-1	238	2	Baylor	FA-07	FA-Ten-06
59 Keglar, Stanford	LB	6-2	240	2	Purdue	D4c-08	D4c-Ten-08
51 McRath, Gerald	LB	6-3	231	1	Southern Miss	D4a-09	D4a-Ten-09
57 Rivera, Mike	LB	6-2	245	1	Kansas	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
44 Togafau, Pago	LB	5-11	240	3	Idaho State	W-Ari-10	FA-Ari-07
50 Thornton, David	LB	6-2	225	8	North Carolina	FA-Ind-06	D4-Ind-02
55 Tulloch, Stephen	LB	5-11	235	4	NC State	D4b-06	D4b-Ten-06
52 Winborn, Jamie	LB	5-11	230	9	Vanderbilt	FA-09	D2-SF-01
Witherspoon, Will	LB	6-1	240	8	Georgia	FA-Phi-10	D3-Car-02
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
31 Finnegan, Cortland	CB	5-10	188	4	Samford	D7a-06	D7a-Ten-06
22 Fuller, Vincent	S	6-1	190	5	Virginia Tech	D4a-05	D4a-Ten-05
33 Griffin, Michael	S	6-0	202	3	Texas	D1-07	D1-Ten-07
Hill, Tye	CB	5-10	185	4	Clemson	FA-Atl-10	D1-StL-06
37 Hood, Rod	CB	5-11	198	7	Auburn	FA-09	FA-Phi-03
24 Hope, Chris	S	6-0	208	8	Florida State	FA-Pit-06	D3-Pit-02
36 Love, Jamar	CB	6-0	191	1	Arkansas	FA-09	FA-NE-09
30 McCourty, Jason	CB	6-0	193	1	Rutgers	D6a-09	D6a-Ten-09
29 Mouton, Ryan	CB	5-9	187	1	Hawaii	D3b-09	D3b-Ten-09
23 Nickey, Donnie	S	6-3	210	7	Ohio State	D5-03	D5-Ten-03
39 Schommer, Nick	S	6-0	201	1	North Dakota State	D7b-09	D7b-Ten-09
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
58 Amato, Ken	LS	6-2	245	7	Montana State	FA-03	FA-Car-02
2 Bironas, Rob	K	6-0	215	5	Georgia Southern	FA-05	FA-GB-02
6 Kern, Brett	P	6-2	215	2	Toledo	W-Den-09	FA-Den-08
3 Schmitt, Ricky	P	6-3	210	1	Shepherd	FA-10	FA-Ari-07

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	18	Kenny Britt
	12	Justin Gage
WR	85	Nate Washington
	17	Damian Williams (R)
LT	71	Michael Roos
	66	Mike Otto
LG	54	Eugene Amano
	77	Ryan Durand
C	64	Leroy Harris
	61	Fernando Velasco
RG	73	Jake Scott
	77	Ryan Durand
RT	76	David Stewart
	66	Mike Otto
TE	80	Bo Scaife
	89	Jared Cook
QB	10	Vince Young
	11	Chris Simms
FB	45	Ahmard Hall
RB	28	Chris Johnson
	21	Javon Ringer

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	96	Derrick Morgan (R)
	98	Dave Ball
DT	91	Jason Jones
	75	Jovan Haye
DT	97	Tony Brown
	94	Sen'Derrick Marks
DE	95	William Hayes
	78	Jacob Ford
LB		Will Witherspoon
	59	Stanford Keglar
LB	55	Stephen Tulloch
	51	Gerald McRath
LB	51	Gerald McRath
	56	Colin Allred
CB		Tye Hill
	29	Ryan Mouton
CB	31	Cortland Finnegan
	37	Rod Hood
SS	24	Chris Hope
		Myron Rolle (R)
FS	33	Michael Griffin
	23	Donnie Nickey

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Rob Bironas	P	6	Brett Kern
KR	18	Kenny Britt	PR	84	Mark Jones

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Jeff Fisher
Offensive Coordinator: Mike Heimerdinger
Defensive Coordinator: Chuck Cecil
Special Teams: Alan Lowry
Assistant Special Teams: Marty Galbraith
Quarterbacks: Craig Johnson
Running Backs: Kennedy Pola
Wide Receivers: Fred Graves
Tight Ends: John Zernhelt
Offensive Line: Mike Munchak
Offensive Assistant: Richie Wessman
Offensive Quality Control: Dowell Loggains
Defensive Line: Jim Washburn
Asst. Head Coach/Linebackers: Dave McGinnis
Assistant Secondary: Tim Hauck
Secondary: Marcus Robertson
Asst. Head Coach/Strength and Conditioning: Steve Watterson

FANTASY FLASH

Kenny Britt was one of two rookie wide receivers to lead his team in receiving yardage in 2009 (with 701 yards on 42 catches). The other was Cleveland's Mohamed Massaquoi. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(8–8)*

Sept. 10	at Pittsburgh	(ot)	L	10–13
Sept. 20	Houston		L	31–34
Sept. 27	at N.Y. Jets		L	17–24
Oct. 4	at Jacksonville		L	17–37
Oct. 11	Indianapolis		L	9–31
Oct. 18	at New England		L	0–59
Nov. 1	Jacksonville		W	30–13
Nov. 8	at San Francisco		W	34–27
Nov. 15	Buffalo		W	41–17
Nov. 23	at Houston		W	20–17
Nov. 29	Arizona		W	20–17
Dec. 6	at Indianapolis		L	17–27
Dec. 13	St. Louis		W	47– 7
Dec. 20	Miami	(ot)	W	27–24
Dec. 25	San Diego		L	17–42
Jan. 3	at Seattle		W	17–13

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Oakland	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	Denver	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Dallas	4:15 pm
Oct. 18	at Jacksonville (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 24	Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at San Diego	4:05 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 14	at Miami	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Washington	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Houston	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Dec. 9	Indianapolis (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 19	Houston	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at Indianapolis	1:00 pm

denver BRONCOS

3 AFC WEST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

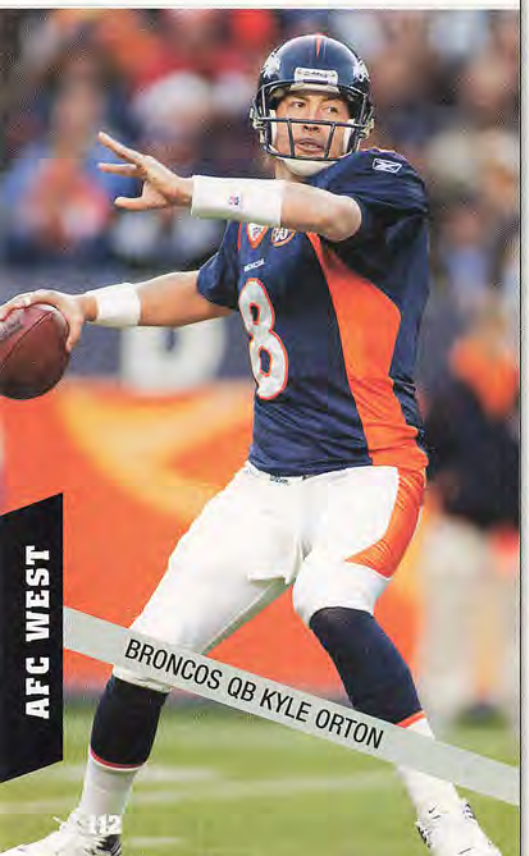
PRESIDENT AND CEO: Pat Bowlen
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER: Joe Ellis
GENERAL MANAGER: Brian Xanders
STADIUM: Invesco Field at Mile High (76,125)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.denverbroncos.com
TICKETS: 720-258-3333
TRAINING CAMP: Bowlen Centre (Englewood, Colo.)

DENVER

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	13	PLAYOFFS
2006	9	
2007	7	
2008	8	
2009	8	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



BRONCOS QB KYLE ORTON

AFC WEST

Mike Shanahan is long gone, but his words from the day he left the Broncos still hang in Denver's thin air: "They would be crazy to break up this offense." So what has Shanahan's successor, Josh McDaniels, done? He has broken up the Broncos' offense. Jay Cutler, gone. Brandon Marshall, gone. Casey Wiegmann, gone. All three played in the Pro Bowl after the 2008 season, and all three have been shown the door, along with many others.

McDaniels has spent much of his time blowing up the roster he inherited in January 2009. Offense, defense, hasn't mattered. If you were a Shanahan man, you might as well have had a bull's-eye instead of a number on your back.

Question is, will the 2010 Broncos be better in the aftermath of all the changes? They'll be younger, with McDaniels having acquired several draft picks for the deposed players. But better? Most will believe it when they see it, especially now that Kyle Orton will be looking over his shoulder at starting quarterback-in-waiting Tim Tebow.

COACHES McDaniels calls the shots during the offseason and calls the plays on game day. He was the offensive coordinator for the 2007 New England Patriots, who were unbeaten in the regular season. As for his head coaching track record … um, did we mention he was the offensive coordinator of the 2007 Patriots? You knew he was going to make changes, having inherited a team that had missed the playoffs three years in a row, but he has chosen the path of most resistance. He not only dumped young Pro Bowlers in Marshall and Cutler, but he has also compromised the leadership abilities of Cutler's successor, Orton, by drafting Tebow. Maybe it will all work out, but it's a difficult dynamic with Orton starting the season knowing he isn't considered the long-term answer by his coach. McDaniels hired Mike McCoy as offensive coordinator, and both share the same philosophy: lots of shotgun, lots of three-wide sets, lots of pick plays. What, you think picks are illegal in the NFL? Right. And so is traveling in the NBA. How much does McDaniels like the shotgun? He used a first-rounder on Tebow, didn't he? New defensive coordinator Don Martindale, who takes over for Mike Nolan, is a Rex Ryan 3-4 disciple who loves to bring pressure from the edge. What he needs to do is find someone other than Elvis Dumervil who can do it. **GRADE: C**

QUARTERBACKS By unofficial count, the next analyst to say "Kyle Orton manages the game" will be the 1,000th. Translation: Orton, whose arm and mobility are the stuff of journeymen quarterbacks, needs playmakers around him because he can't carry a team. He is, however, a heady player, a standup guy and a born leader. The question facing the Broncos is this: How much of a distraction will Tebow be for Orton this season? If the Broncos are fading from the playoff picture, say, 10 games into the season, the masses will be calling for a change. A few words of caution for those who believe Brady Quinn can push Orton for the starting job: Mike Holmgren, who knows a thing or 22 about quarterbacks, ran off Quinn without so much as a second look. Yes, it's conceivable that Tebow could play late this season, but 2011, if not 2012, is a better guess. **GRADE: C**

RUNNING BACKS Enough already with Knowshon Moreno splitting time with Correll Buckhalter. You don't use the 12th pick in the 2009 draft on a part-timer. Moreno will have to improve dramatically on his rookie season, when he averaged 3.8 yards per carry. He needs to break through the first wave of would-be tacklers and get into the secondary, as he did so often in the big, bad SEC. Of all the players on the roster, he might be at the top of the list of breakout candidates. Buckhalter is a solid backup (642 yards, 5.4 yards a carry) who is widely respected for playing through serious knee injuries that cost him three seasons. Fullback Spencer Larsen doubles as a linebacker. **GRADE: B-**

RECEIVERS Orton spent most of last season playing pitch-and-catch with Marshall, who caught 101 balls for 10 touchdowns. So who picks up the slack in Marshall's absence? The Broncos figure to use mostly three-wide sets, so look for Eddie Royal to start in the slot with Jabar Gaffney and No. 1 pick Demaryius Thomas split wide. Thomas must produce early, period. If he isn't ready, the pressure will be amped up on Gaffney and Royal. Combined total of touchdown catches between them in 2009? Two, both by Gaffney. Royal had a shaky year, catching only 37 balls in his first year in McDaniels' system, but the veterans in the locker room believe he'll bounce back. Daniel Graham isn't used much in the passing game but is arguably the best blocking tight end in the business. That's not a bad thing for a team with a No. 1 draft pick at tailback. Finally, there's tight end Richard Quinn, a No. 2 pick who disappeared in his rookie season. He needs to get on the field and produce. **GRADE: C-**

Orton: Peter Brouillet; Dumervil: Wesley Hitt/Getty Images

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Nothing to Show How much do the Broncos need their draft class of 2009 to step up this season? Consider this: Robert Ayers, selected with the 18th pick, was supposed to put pressure on the quarterback. His sack total as a rookie: Zero. Alphonso Smith, who intercepted seven passes as a senior at Wake Forest, impressed the coaches so much that they traded away this year's No. 1 to draft him in the second round: His interception total as a rookie: Zero. Tight end Richard Quinn cost the Broncos two third-rounders so they could move up to select him in the second round in the 2009 draft. His catch total as a rookie: Zero.

The Epitome of Average This year's Broncos won't have to be much better than average to improve upon last season, when the Broncos were the very definition of average. Consider this: The Broncos finished 8–8 overall — 4–4 at home, 4–4 on the road, 3–3 vs. the AFC West, 5–5 outside the West and 2–2 against the NFC. Oh, and did we mention they outscored their opponents, 326–324? Not sure how they didn't finish 325–325.

Do you Know(shon) Big Gainers? The Broncos desperately need Knowshon Moreno to break some long runs. He carried the ball 247 times as a rookie and had two — count 'em, two — carries of 20-plus yards. His backup, Correll Buckhalter, had five.

2009 STATS

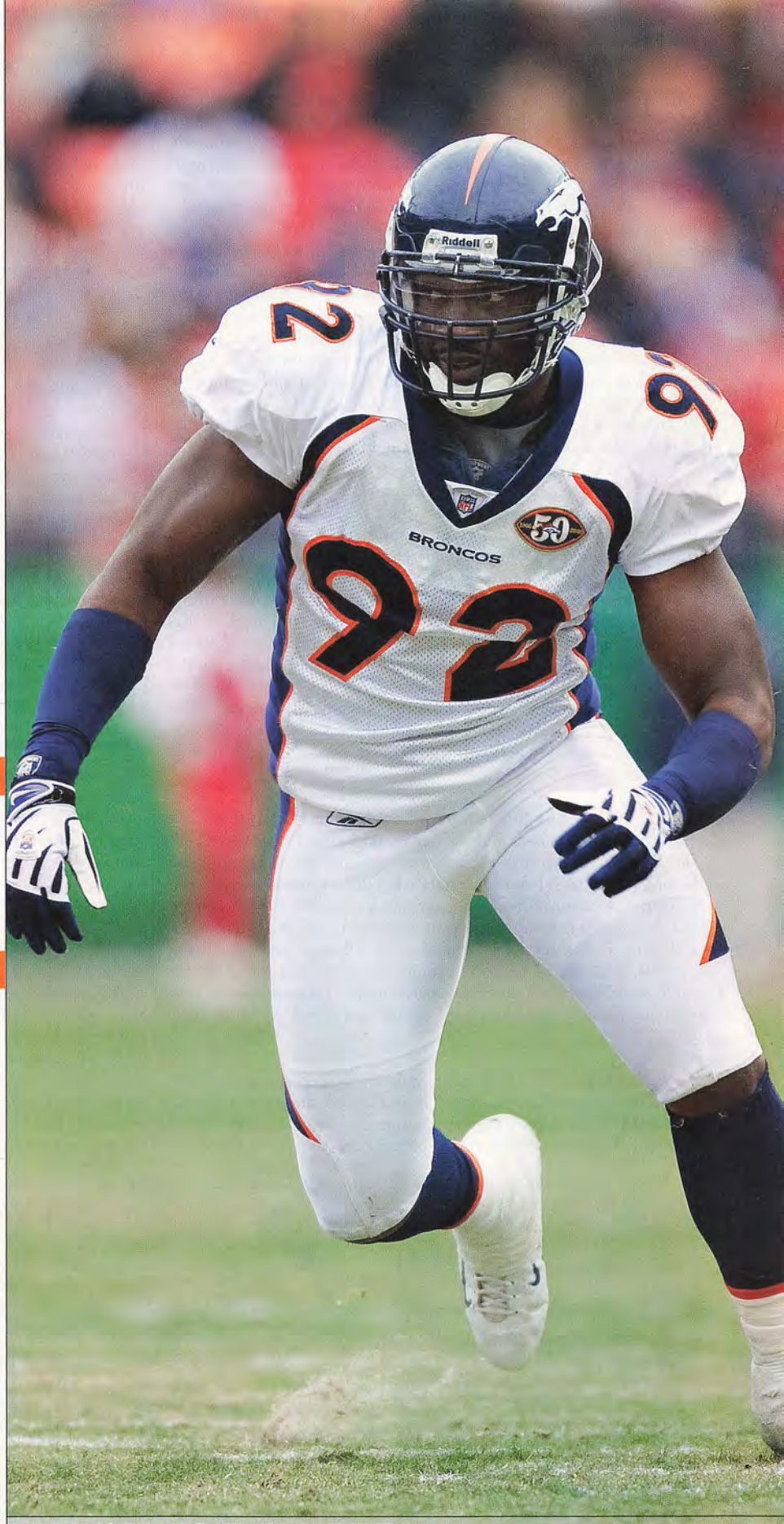
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	341.4	15	8
Rushing	114.8	18	11
Passing	226.7	13	6
Scoring	20.4	20	10
Punt Returns	9.5	T11	5
Kick Returns	21.4	T26	14
Red Zone TD %	48.1	T23	12

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	315.0	7	5
Rushing	128.7	26	12
Passing	186.3	3	3
Scoring	20.2	T12	T7
Interceptions	17	T13	T6
Sacks	39	10	4
Turnover Differential	+7	7	3

SCOUTING THE BRONCOS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP DENVER

"They've voided themselves of arguably their two best players, Jay Cutler and Brandon Marshall. That has to be a little bit of a deficiency for them. … There were probably 28 quarterback coaches who went 'Whew!' when Denver drafted Tim Tebow. He's a major project. It's just another example of Josh (McDaniels') kind of youth and enthusiasm. 'I can do it, you know. Hey, I can do this.'… They've gotten a little bit older on defense. They've added some good pieces with Jamal Williams and players like that, but Brian Dawkins and Champ Bailey, those guys are getting up in age a little bit, so it will be interesting to see if they can kind of get back to how they played defensively the first six games of last year compared to how they played the last half of last year. … They're on a gradual downhill slope right now."



BRONCOS OLB ELVIS DUMERVIL

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN This was a strength under Shanahan but has become a position in flux under McDaniels. It's all about philosophy. Shanahan, a zone-blocking devotee, liked his linemen lean and mean, particularly the guards and center. McDaniels, who prefers a power-blocking scheme, is cleaning house in an attempt to get bigger and stronger. Left tackle Ryan Clady is Pro Bowl stuff, but a torn patellar tendon he suffered playing pickup basketball in April will set him back. It will be well into training camp, at least, before he's back. If he is out for any games, 2008 rookie free agent Tyler Polumbus will be under the gun to stop opponents' best pass-rushers. Ryan Harris figures to start at right tackle, but rookie second-rounder Zane Beadles could move in during the season. Underrated Chris Kuper is set at right guard, but left guard and center are major question marks. A couple of dark horses to keep an eye on: Seth Olsen, a fourth-rounder in '09 who could move in as the starting left guard, veteran Russ Hochstein, who can play any interior position, and rookie J.D. Walton, who may end up starting at center by default. **GRADE: C+**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Another year, another remake on the defensive line. Welcome to life in Denver, where the Broncos routinely turn to free agency — out of desperation, not desire — to patch holes up front. This year's newcomers include Jarvis Green, a part-time starter in New England who will play in Denver, and fellow 30-somethings Justin Bannan and Jamal Williams. Or should we say the Performer Formerly Known as Jamal Williams? If the former San Diego star has one more big year in him, it could dramatically impact the defense's overall performance. But he's 34 and was deemed expendable by the Chargers. Bannan is a tough guy who could stabilize, for the short term at least, a longtime problem area. This much is certain: With right outside linebacker Dumervil, who led the league with 17 sacks, certain to occupy double-teams, the Broncos need their ends to rush the passer. **GRADE: D**

LINEBACKERS The Broncos needed an infusion of youth here but didn't get it in the draft. D.J. Williams and Mario Haggan are solid, and Dumervil is disruptive almost every Sunday, but there's little else beyond them unless left outside linebacker Robert Ayers recovers from a lost rookie season to become an impact pass-rusher. Could happen, too. Ayers is a big-time athlete who devoted himself to getting bigger and faster in the offseason. The Broncos did sign free agent Akin Ayodele, who started for the Dolphins last year, after the draft. He could work his way up the depth chart ahead of Haggan. But the unit is unquestionably thin. An injury or two and things could get ugly. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The good news is the Broncos have two likely Hall of Famers in their secondary. The bad news is that Brian Dawkins (36) and Champ Bailey (32) aren't getting any younger. Add Renaldo Hill and André Goodman to the mix and every starter is 30-something. But age isn't the problem. Bailey remains among the elite cover corners in the game, and Dawkins was the Broncos' unofficial MVP last season. The issue is a lack of pressure by the front seven, leaving the backs vulnerable in coverage. If Alphonso Smith, for whom the Broncos traded a 2010 first-rounder to pick in the second round last year, isn't a quality nickelback, he'll officially qualify as a bust. Smith was so lost as a rookie, the Broncos signed graybeard Ty Law to be the nickelback. Safeties Darcel McBath and David Bruton provide quality depth. Bruton already is earning his keep as a quality special teamer. **GRADE: B+**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Akin Ayodele	LB	Miami	Andra Davis	LB	Buffalo
Justin Bannan	DE	Baltimore	Ben Hamilton	G	Seattle
Jarvis Green	DE	New England	Peyton Hillis	RB	Cleveland
Brady Quinn	QB	Cleveland	Brandon Marshall	WR	Miami
Jamal Williams	NT	San Diego	Tony Scheffler	TE	Detroit
			Casey Wiegmann	C	Kansas City

Once again, the Broncos turned to free agency to provide a Band-Aid for the defensive line. Coach Josh McDaniels knows Green well, having worked with him in New England. He believes Green will upgrade the pass rush. Bannan, meanwhile, is a career defensive tackle whose main responsibility will be against the run. Williams? He might land in the Hall of Fame, but what matters is how much tread he has left on the tires at age 34. It could help him that he barely played last season before an injury landed him on IR.

SPECIALISTS Matt Prater is one of the league's better long-range kickers — he could have a 60-yard field goal in his future — but punting has been an issue since McDaniels cut Brett Kern during the 2009 season. Britton Colquitt will go to camp as the No. 1 but will have competition. Royal and rookie Perrish Cox figure to handle the returns. **GRADE: C+**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Broncos ranked No. 2 in the league in offense in 2008 but dropped to 15th in McDaniels' first season. And then he dumped Marshall and Tony Scheffler, one of the top big-play tight ends in the business. This is progress? Only if young players step up. Same goes for the defense, where Ayers and Smith must break through and become impact players. The bottom line? It's all on McDaniels. A lot of NFL coaches clean house after getting their gigs, especially when players don't fit their system. The trick is replacing them with better players. Denver has missed the playoffs for four consecutive seasons, something fans hadn't seen since the early to mid-'70s. There's no reason to think that trend will change this season.

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

DENVER IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Demaryius Thomas	WR	6-3	229	Georgia Tech
1. Tim Tebow	QB	6-3	245	Florida
2. Zane Beadles	T	6-4	305	Utah
3. J.D. Walton	C	6-3	305	Baylor
3. Eric Decker	WR	6-2	215	Minnesota
5. Perrish Cox	CB	6-0	195	Oklahoma State
6. Eric Olsen	G	6-4	305	Notre Dame
7. Syd'Quan Thompson	CB	5-9	187	California
7. Jammie Kirlew	OLB	6-3	264	Indiana

The Broncos already know Tebow is a project who, by design, will provide little or no impact as a rookie. That heightens the importance of Thomas being able to step in and contribute in his first season. McDaniels says Thomas reminds him of Brandon Marshall. Say what? If the kid produces half as much as Marshall did, the Broncos should be happy. Decker could contribute as a rookie, too, if he's healthy after two foot surgeries. Walton could well start as a rookie since center is a black hole, and Beadles will compete at tackle and guard, where the Broncos are thin. The dark horse in the group is Cox, who will handle kick return duties right away and could be in the mix to become the nickelback, a job Alphonso Smith was handed but lost as a rookie in 2009.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Brandstater, Tom	QB	6-5	223	1	Fresno State	D6-09	D6-Den-09
8 Orton, Kyle	QB	6-4	225	5	Purdue	T-Chi-09	D4-Chi-05
9 Quinn, Brady	QB	6-3	235	3	Notre Dame	T-Cle-10	D1b-Cle-07
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Arrington, J.J.	RB	5-9	212	4	California	FA-10	D2-Ari-05
35 Ball, Lance	RB	5-9	220	2	Maryland	FA-09	FA-StL-08
28 Buckhalter, Correll	RB	6-0	223	9	Nebraska	FA-Phi-09	D4-Phi-01
27 Moreno, Knowshon	RB	5-11	210	1	Georgia	D1a-09	D1a-Den-09
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
85 Branson, Marquez	TE	6-2	241	1	Central Arkansas	FA-09	FA-Den-09
10 Gaffney, Jabar	WR	6-2	200	8	Florida	FA-NE-09	D2-Hou-02
89 Graham, Daniel	TE	6-3	257	8	Colorado	FA-NE-07	D1-NE-02
84 Lloyd, Brandon	WR	6-0	194	7	Illinois	FA-09	D4-SF-03
11 McKinley, Kenny	WR	6-0	183	1	South Carolina	D5-09	D5-Den-09
81 Quinn, Richard	TE	6-4	255	1	North Carolina	D2c-09	D2c-Den-09
19 Royal, Eddie	WR	5-10	180	2	Virginia Tech	D2-08	D2-Den-08
14 Stokley, Brandon	WR	6-0	192	11	UL Lafayette	FA-07	D4-Bal-99
12 Willis, Matthew	WR	6-0	190	2	UCLA	FA-08	FA-Bal-07
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
67 Batiste, D'Anthony	T	6-4	314	4	UL Lafayette	FA-09	FA-Dal-06
78 Clady, Ryan	T	6-6	325	2	Boise State	D1-08	D1-Den-08
61 Erickson, Mitch	G	6-5	286	1	South Dakota State	FA-08	FA-Den-08
74 Harris, Ryan	T	6-5	300	3	Notre Dame	D3-07	D3-Den-07
71 Hochstein, Russ	G	6-4	305	9	Nebraska	T-NE-09	D5-TB-01
73 Kuper, Chris	G	6-4	303	4	North Dakota	D5-06	D5-Den-06
70 Olsen, Seth	G	6-5	308	1	Iowa	D4b-09	D4b-Den-09
77 Polumbus, Tyler	T	6-8	300	2	Colorado	FA-08	FA-Den-08
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
75 Baker, Chris	NT	6-2	329	1	Hampton	FA-09	FA-Den-09
99 Bannan, Justin	DE	6-3	310	8	Colorado	FA-Bal-10	D5-Buf-02
91 Fields, Ronald	NT	6-2	314	5	Mississippi State	FA-SF-09	D5-SF-05
93 Green, Jarvis	DE	6-3	285	8	LSU	FA-NE-10	D4b-NE-02
98 McBean, Ryan	DE	6-5	297	2	Oklahoma State	FA-08	D4-Pit-07
93 Pedescleaux, Everette	DE	6-4	312	1	Northern Iowa	FA-09	FA-Den-09
96 Powell, Carlton	DE	6-2	312	2	Virginia Tech	D5-08	D5-Den-08
97 Smith, Le Kevin	DE	6-3	308	4	Nebraska	T-NE-09	D6-NE-06
79 Thomas, Marcus	DE	6-3	316	3	Florida	D4-07	D4-Den-07
76 Williams, Jamal	NT	6-3	348	12	Oklahoma State	FA-SD-10	SD2-SD-98
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56 Ayers, Robert	OLB	6-3	274	1	Tennessee	D1b-09	D1b-Den-09
51 Ayodele, Akin	LB	6-2	245	8	Purdue	FA-Mia-10	D3-Jac-02
92 Dumervil, Elvis	OLB	5-11	248	4	Louisville	D4b-06	D4b-Den-06
58 Greisen, Nick	ILB	6-1	242	8	Wisconsin	FA-09	D5-NYG-02
57 Haggan, Mario	ILB	6-3	267	7	Mississippi State	FA-08	D7-Buf-03
52 Kelley, Braxton	ILB	6-0	242	1	Kentucky	FA-09	FA-Den-09
46 Larsen, Spencer	ILB	6-2	243	2	Arizona	D6-08	D6-Den-08
94 Moss, Jarvis	OLB	6-7	257	3	Florida	D1-07	D1-Den-07
95 Reid, Darrell	OLB	6-2	270	5	Minnesota	FA-Ind-09	FA-Ind-05
55 Williams, D.J.	ILB	6-1	242	6	Miami	D1-04	D1-Den-04
59 Woodyard, Wesley	ILB	6-0	222	2	Kentucky	FA-08	FA-Den-08
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24 Bailey, Champ	CB	6-0	192	11	Georgia	T-Was-04	D1-Was-99
36 Barrett, Josh	S	6-2	225	2	Arizona State	D7-08	D7-Den-08
30 Bruton, David	S	6-2	211	1	Notre Dame	D4a-09	D4a-Den-09
25 Carter, Tony	CB	5-9	175	1	Florida State	FA-09	FA-Den-09
20 Dawkins, Brian	S	6-0	210	14	Clemson	FA-Phi-09	D2-Phi-96
21 Goodman, André	CB	5-10	184	8	South Carolina	FA-Mia-09	D3-Det-02
23 Hill, Renaldo	S	5-11	205	9	Michigan State	FA-Mia-09	D7-Ari-01
33 Jones, Nathan	CB	5-10	185	6	Rutgers	FA-Mia-10	D7-Dal-04
31 McBath, Darcel	S	6-1	198	1	Texas Tech	D2b-09	D2b-Den-09
40 Moulton, Rashod	CB	5-11	201	1	Fort Valley State	FA-09	FA-Jac-07
33 Smith, Alphonso	CB	5-9	190	1	Wake Forest	D2a-09	D2a-Den-09
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Colquitt, Britton	P	6-3	204	1	Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Den-09
66 Paxton, Lonie	LS	6-2	281	10	Sacramento State	FA-NE-09	FA-NE-00
5 Prater, Matt	K	5-10	187	3	Central Florida	PS-Mia-07	FA-Det-06

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	88	Demaryius Thomas (R)
	87	Eric Decker (R)
WR	19	Eddie Royal
	14	Brandon Stokley
WR	10	Jabar Gaffney
	84	Brandon Lloyd
LT	78	Ryan Clady
	77	Tyler Polumbus
LG	70	Seth Olsen
	71	Russ Hochstein
C	50	J.D. Walton (R)
	71	Russ Hochstein
RG	73	Chris Kuper
	71	Russ Hochstein
RT	74	Ryan Harris
	68	Zane Beadles (R)
TE	89	Daniel Graham
	81	Richard Quinn
QB	8	Kyle Orton
	9	Brady Quinn
TB	27	Knowshon Moreno
	28	Correll Buckhalter

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	99	Justin Bannan
	98	Ryan McBean
NT	76	Jamal Williams
	91	Ronald Fields
DE	93	Jarvis Green
	79	Marcus Thomas
OLB	56	Robert Ayers
	95	Darrell Reid
ILB	57	Mario Haggan
	51	Akin Ayodele
ILB	55	D.J. Williams
	46	Spencer Larsen
OLB	92	Elvis Dumervil
	94	Jarvis Moss
CB	24	Champ Bailey
	33	Alphonso Smith
CB	21	André Goodman
	32	Perrish Cox (R)
SS	23	Renaldo Hill
	30	David Bruton
FS	20	Brian Dawkins
	31	Darcel McBath

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Matt Prater
KR	32	Perrish Cox (R)
P	4	Britton Colquitt
PR	19	Eddie Royal

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Josh McDaniels
Assistant to Head Coach: Mark Thewes
Offensive Coordinator: Mike McCoy
Defensive Coordinator: Don Martindale
Special Teams: Mike Priefer
Asst. Special Teams: Keith Burns
Quarterbacks: Ben McDaniels
Running Backs: Eric Studesville
Wide Receivers: Adam Gase
Tight Ends: Bob Ligashesky
Offensive Line: Clancy Barone
Asst. Offensive Line: Bob Wylie
Defensive Line: Wayne Nunnely
Asst. Linebackers: Roman Phifer
Secondary: Ed Donatell
Defensive Assistant: Craig Aukerman
Defensive Assistant: Jay Rodgers
Strength and Conditioning: Rich Tuten

FANTASY FLASH

After scoring only three times in his first 10 NFL games, **Knowshon Moreno**, the team's 2009 top draft pick, reached the end zone six times over the final six weeks of the season. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(8–8)*

Sept. 13	at Cincinnati		W	12– 7
Sept. 20	Cleveland		W	27– 6
Sept. 27	at Oakland		W	23– 3
Oct. 4	Dallas		W	17–10
Oct. 11	New England	(ot)	W	20–17
Oct. 19	at San Diego		W	34–23
Nov. 1	at Baltimore		L	7–30
Nov. 9	Pittsburgh		L	10–28
Nov. 15	at Washington		L	17–27
Nov. 22	San Diego		L	3–32
Nov. 26	N.Y. Giants		W	26– 6
Dec. 6	at Kansas City		W	44–13
Dec. 13	at Indianapolis		L	16–28
Dec. 20	Oakland		L	19–20
Dec. 27	at Philadelphia		L	27–30
Jan. 3	Kansas City		L	24–44

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Seattle	4:05 pm
Sept. 26	Indianapolis	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	N.Y. Jets	4:05 pm
Oct. 24	Oakland	4:15 pm
Oct. 31	at San Francisco	1:00 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 14	Kansas City	4:05 pm
Nov. 22	at San Diego (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 28	St. Louis	4:15 pm
Dec. 5	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Arizona	4:15 pm
Dec. 19	at Oakland	4:15 pm
Dec. 26	Houston	4:05 pm
Jan. 2	San Diego	4:15 pm

kansas city CHIEFS

4 AFC WEST FORECAST

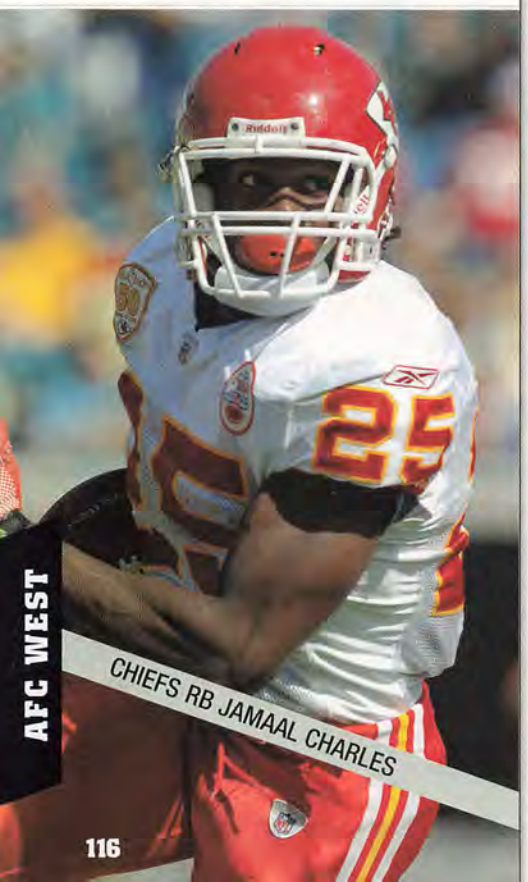
KANSAS CITY

THE ORGANIZATION

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD: Clark Hunt
GENERAL MANAGER: Scott Pioli
STADIUM: Arrowhead Stadium (74,777)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.kcchiefs.com
TICKETS: 888-992-4433
TRAINING CAMP: Missouri Western University (St. Joseph's, Mo.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	10
2006	9
2007	4
2008	2
2009	4



CHIEFS RB JAMAAL CHARLES

AFC WEST

The new has worn off the Chiefs' top-to-bottom changes from last year, and now the leadership group will try to prove it was worth all the fuss of a year ago. General manager Scott Pioli and coach Todd Haley joined the Chiefs in early 2009, and it didn't take long for them to realize that players' work habits were poor, the locker room lacked talent and leaders, and that many of the organization's gambles — before and after Pioli's and Haley's arrival — just weren't paying off.

Kansas City changed most everything last year, and the renovation project has continued into 2010. In the shadow of last year's chaotic season, the Chiefs hired two new coordinators, embraced the surprising emergence of running back Jamaal Charles and put together a free agent and draft class designed to strengthen the myriad weaknesses that led to last season's 4–12 finish.

The Chiefs, now in the second phase of the project, are confident that time, familiarity and comfort will lead to success. But after a third consecutive losing season, fans in Kansas City need proof that the new way is different from the disappointment they've gotten used to.

COACHES Haley endured a hectic first season, firing Chan Gailey as offensive coordinator and tabbing himself to call plays, and observers hope the second-year coach matured from the experience. He at least learned that he can't be responsible for everything. Haley hired Charlie Weis as offensive coordinator, bringing an experienced and proven voice to a franchise that lacked both last season. Haley has said he won't meddle in Weis' playcalling duties, but that promise will be among the hands-on Haley's biggest challenges as he attempts to coexist and thrive with a coordinator who is older, more experienced and has had more success. Weis' top priority will be to mold quarterback Matt Cassel into a reliable starter. Haley hired Romeo Crennel as defensive coordinator, adding another powerful voice to a unit that foundered in 2009 under Clancy Pendergast. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS The Chiefs expect more from Cassel in 2009, and they hope the improvements on offense — the addition of Weis, a strengthened line and more weapons at receiver — will give him the kind of confidence he showed two years ago in New England. Cassel was inconsistent last season, and that's something Haley has said he won't stand for. Cassel threw 16 interceptions (and 16 touchdown passes), and too often he looked rattled behind a patchwork line. He rushed passes, made off-balance throws and forced passes to receivers. Haley benched Cassel during a home game against Denver in favor of Brodie Croyle, who will return as the backup. Cassel was at his best in difficult situations, leading desperate comeback attempts and making perfect throws to give the Chiefs a chance. Kansas City needs Cassel to be calmer, particularly early in games, if he is to remain the unquestioned starter. Croyle has started at least two games in each of his four seasons in the NFL, but he is 0–9 as a starter and appears destined for a career as a backup. ***GRADE: C***

RUNNING BACKS Charles was so dazzling at the end of last season that it was difficult to remember that the Chiefs listed him among their inactive players in a Week 2 loss to Oakland. Charles showed that he was among the NFL's most talented backs while rushing for 968 yards in the season's final eight weeks. For the season, he averaged a dazzling 5.9 yards per carry. But Charles is neither big nor durable. He played through a nagging shoulder injury, and that compelled the Chiefs to find help. They signed veteran Thomas Jones, who won't be expected to rush for 1,402 yards, as he did last season with the Jets but should handle at least a dozen carries per game. He could steal more carries from Charles if he proves he still has feature back skills at age 32. If nothing else, Jones will keep Charles fresh. And if Charles keeps improving, the Chiefs might have the NFL's next star rusher. ***GRADE: A-***

RECEIVERS Time is running out for Dwayne Bowe to prove he's capable of being a No. 1 receiver. His concentration, judgment and hands are suspect, and despite direct coaching from Haley, a former receivers coach, Bowe was as inconsistent as ever in 2009. Haley was often frustrated with Bowe, who the Chiefs believe possesses elite talent but a poor approach. That's why it was essential that Kansas City re-sign Chris Chambers, who seemed to spark the Chiefs' offense when Bowe couldn't after being claimed off waivers from San Diego last November. Still needing playmakers, the Chiefs used a second-round draft pick on Dexter McCluster of Ole Miss. They plan to use McCluster, who also played running back in college, as a slot receiver. Haley likes McCluster's versatility, and the 5'8" speedster needs to help an offense that has learned it can't yet trust Bowe to shoulder the load. As for tight ends, nobody on the roster is the least bit reminiscent of Tony Gonzalez. ***GRADE: C-***

Charles: Mark Langello; Cassel: Bruce Schwartzman

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Lilja Heads Home Veteran guard Ryan Lilja signed with the Chiefs, his hometown team, five years after Indianapolis plucked him when Kansas City tried to sneak the undrafted rookie through waivers and onto its practice squad. Lilja, who grew up in a Kansas City suburb, became a starter for all but one of his five seasons with the Colts, with whom he played in two Super Bowls. Lilja passed on overtures from Seattle and Houston to return to Kansas City.

Jets Thank Jones From Afar Shortly after Thomas Jones signed a free agent deal with the Chiefs, his former team, the Jets, purchased a full-page ad in *The Kansas City Star* to thank Jones for his three seasons — and 3,833 rushing yards — with New York. The ad praised Jones' toughness, dedication and leadership.

Berry Will Sign Rookie Eric Berry, the No. 5 overall draft pick, revealed before the draft that his character had been shaped when he was jilted years ago by Deion Sanders. Berry said the flashy former star cornerback refused to sign an autograph when Berry was young, and he vowed never to allow a fan to feel the way he felt that day.

2009 STATS

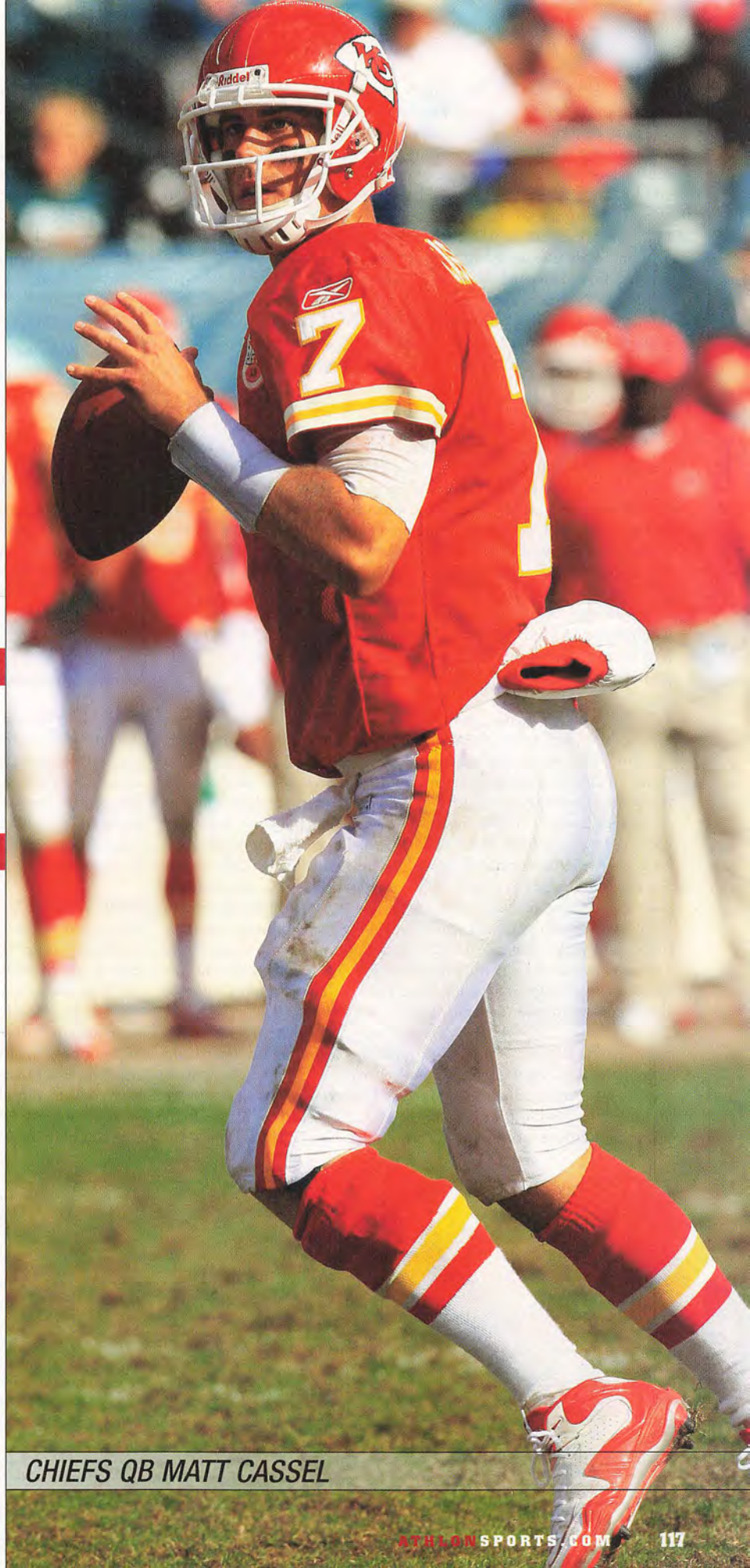
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	303.2	25	13
Rushing	120.6	11	8
Passing	182.6	25	11
Scoring	18.4	23	12
Punt Returns	6.5	27	14
Kick Returns	21.6	25	13
Red Zone TD %	47.4	25	13

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	388.2	30	15
Rushing	156.5	31	16
Passing	231.7	22	12
Scoring	26.5	29	16
Interceptions	15	T16	T9
Sacks	22	31	15
Turnover Differential	+1	16	8

SCOUTING THE CHIEFS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP KANSAS CITY

"I don't think Matt Cassel is the long-term answer. They're wanting to fool themselves that he is. They think they've got their guy, but I don't think so. Not from what I've seen. … Their weakness is obvious. They've got the worst offensive line in the league. … Romeo Crennel, he's not going to out-scheme you, but the players are going to play hard for him. … Yeah, we had Eric Berry rated that highly (No. 5). We thought he was a really good player, plus he could be a corner. He's a tough kid. Ideally, he'd be a little bigger, but he's tough and he can cover the slot. … Todd Haley will be better as a coach. He's up and down like a pogo stick with his emotions. You just can't do that. Charlie Weis being there and Romeo being there, those are two great hires, because Charlie will put him in his place. That's probably what he needs. He needs to be the head coach and let Charlie run the offense and stay away from him."



CHIEFS QB MATT CASSEL

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Chiefs are trying to rebuild their line, and the most looming question centers on left tackle Branden Albert's ability to restore coaches' faith after a disappointing 2009. Albert was among Kansas City's most promising players after his rookie season but was then ordered to lose upward of 40 pounds last year. He struggled, and his confidence was damaged. The team leaned on left guard Brian Waters to counsel Albert, and Kansas City signed veteran guard Ryan Lilja and center Casey Wiegmann to strengthen an otherwise unreliable line. Lilja is expected to start at right guard, and the Chiefs hope Waters, 33, can be counted on for another season or two. But the main concern is whether Albert can return to the promise he showed as a rookie. For now, the Chiefs say he's their left tackle; they passed on drafting a tackle and, for better or worse, have elected to stick with Albert (as well as right tackle Ryan O'Callaghan). **GRADE: C-**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Kansas City is still waiting for ends Glenn Dorsey and Tyson Jackson to live up to the top-5 draft slots in which each was taken, and in the meantime, nosetackle has become a serious concern. Pioli didn't address the nosetackle spot in free agency or the draft, leaving only Ron Edwards and backup journeyman Shaun Smith in one of the most important positions in the 3-4 defense. Dorsey and Jackson took steps last year toward showing they were capable starters at end, but Dorsey had the only sack between them. The Chiefs also had trouble stopping the run in 2009, and there's no evidence to suggest that that deficiency will improve this season. Pioli said during the offseason that he considered trying Dorsey at nosetackle, but that would mean a third position change in as many seasons for Dorsey, and a particularly strange fit at that, considering Dorsey's 6'1", 297-pound frame. **GRADE: B-**

LINEBACKERS Outside linebacker Tamba Hali is the team's best pass-rushing threat, but the Chiefs need help at the other linebacker positions. Outside linebacker Mike Vrabel will be 35 when the season starts, so the team has begun to scale down its expectations for him. Andy Studebaker showed flashes of potential last year while filling in for Vrabel; another promising season could win the former defensive end a more secure place in the team's plans. The team's top inside linebacker, Derrick Johnson, has enough talent to anchor the defense but has never put together a full season of reliable play. He was benched most of last year in favor of the smaller and less athletic Demorrio Williams, whom the Chiefs could turn to again if Johnson, a former first-round pick, struggles. Corey Mays, a fifth-year pro from Notre Dame, is expected to be the other starter at inside linebacker, but his speed and tackling occasionally leave him vulnerable against some of the league's more talented ball-carriers. **GRADE: D**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Kansas City could be on its way toward having one of the AFC's better secondaries if strong safety Eric Berry is as good as advertised, cornerback Brandon Flowers continues to improve and free safety Jarrad Page can stay healthy. The Chiefs used two draft picks to improve at safety, including the No. 5 overall pick on Tennessee's Berry and a fifth-rounder on Kendrick Lewis of Ole Miss. Berry steps directly into a starting job opposite Page, while Lewis will compete for a backup spot in a mix that includes DaJuan Morgan and Jon McGraw. Kansas City also spent a second-round pick on Javier Arenas, who is expected to play nickelback. Flowers is an emerging star, and third-year corner Brandon Carr has shown that he's above average in coverage. Shortly after the draft, Carr began mentoring Berry and establishing chemistry. That will be valuable for a team that had little to brag about a season ago. **GRADE: B**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Thomas Jones	RB	N.Y. Jets	Andy Alleman	G	Indianapolis
Ryan Lilja	G	Indianapolis	Mike Brown	S	Free agent
Shaun Smith	DT	Cincinnati	Sean Ryan	TE	Washington
Jerheme Urban	WR	Arizona	Wade Smith	OL	Houston
Casey Wiegmann	C	Denver	Bobby Wade	WR	Washington

The Chiefs addressed a pair of major needs by bringing in Jones and Lilja. Jones will provide relief for Jamaal Charles, giving Kansas City a big body and an experienced rusher. Lilja is expected to improve a position that became a glaring weakness in 2009, and his postseason experience with the Colts will be valuable to a locker room that isn't used to success. He'll be expected to start at right guard, a spot the Chiefs had little confidence in last season. When Wade Smith signed with the Texans, the Chiefs lost their most versatile backup lineman.

SPECIALISTS Kansas City was eager to draft Arenas because he should supply immediate help to a kick return game that was nothing short of discouraging last season. Arenas was arguably the best return man in the draft. Kicker Ryan Succop earned the coaches' confidence last year by hitting 25-of-29 field goals, showing off his powerful leg by making seven kicks of 45 yards or longer. Dustin Colquitt is expected to resume his place as one of the AFC's most reliable punters. He averaged 45.4 yards per punt in 2009. **GRADE: B**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Chiefs appear to have established some direction to improve a team with plenty of weaknesses. They placed a clear emphasis during the draft on character and speed, attributes that were lacking on the 2009 team. Kansas City has parted ways with the likes of Larry Johnson, and it barely considered adding players with personal baggage. Although the Chiefs might have sacrificed talent in their pursuit of laying a proper foundation, the first steps were taken in building a long-term contender. For now, though, contending for anything other than improvement on last year's 4–12 record will likely have to wait. But after the past three seasons, a flirtation with a .500 record would be tantalizing to the regulars who flock to Arrowhead Stadium on Sundays.

KANSAS CITY IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Eric Berry	S	6-0	211	Tennessee
2. Dexter McCluster	WR	5-8	165	Ole Miss
2. Javier Arenas	CB/KR	5-9	197	Alabama
3. Jon Asamoah	G	6-4	305	Illinois
3. Tony Moeaki	TE	6-3	252	Iowa
5. Kendrick Lewis	S	6-0	198	Ole Miss
5. Cameron Sheffield	OLB	6-2	257	Troy

The Chiefs' top three picks are expected to begin their pro careers with significant roles, none more than Berry. The former Tennessee safety was seen as one of the draft's safest picks, and he'll add youth and playmaking ability to what was a weak position. McCluster and Arenas are versatile and quick, and they were drafted to add speed to a slow and aging team. The Chiefs see McCluster in the DeSean Jackson or Darren Sproles mold, and Arenas offers a breakout threat on kick returns. Moeaki could become Kansas City's No. 1 tight end, but he'll have to prove he's past an injury-plagued college career.

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Cassel, Matt	QB	6-4	230	5	USC	T-NE-09	D7-NE-05
12 Croyle, Brodie	QB	6-2	206	4	Alabama	D3-06	D3-KC-06
15 Gutierrez, Matt	QB	6-4	230	3	Idaho State	W-NE-09	FA-NE-07
4 Palko, Tyler	QB	6-1	215	1	Pittsburgh	FA-10	FA-NO-07

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Battle, Jackie	RB	6-2	238	2	Houston	FA-08	FA-Dal-07
46 Castille, Tim	RB	5-11	238	3	Alabama	FA-09	FA-Ari-07
25 Charles, Jamaal	RB	5-11	199	2	Texas	D3a-08	D3a-KC-08
42 Cox, Mike	FB	6-0	252	2	Georgia Tech	FA-08	FA-KC-08
20 Jones, Thomas	RB	5-10	212	10	Virginia	FA-NYJ-10	D1-Ari-00
32 Moore, Kestahn	RB	5-10	214	1	Florida	FA-09	FA-Den-09
29 Savage, Dantrell	RB	5-8	182	2	Oklahoma State	FA-08	FA-KC-08
21 Smith, Kolby	RB	5-11	219	3	Louisville	D5a-07	D5a-KC-07
40 Williams, Javarris	RB	5-10	223	1	Tennessee State	D7a-09	D7a-KC-09

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Bowe, Dwayne	WR	6-2	221	3	LSU	D1-07	D1-KC-07
11 Chambers, Chris	WR	5-11	210	9	Wisconsin	W-SD-09	D2-Mia-01
10 Copper, Terrance	WR	6-0	207	6	East Carolina	FA-Bal-09	FA-Dal-04
87 Cottam, Brad	TE	6-7	269	2	Tennessee	D3b-08	D3b-KC-08
81 Darling, Devard	WR	6-1	213	6	Washington State	FA-Bal-08	D3-Bal-04
14 Lawrence, Quinten	WR	6-0	184	1	McNeese State	D6-09	D6-KC-09
17 Long, Lance	WR	5-11	186	1	Mississippi State	FA-09	FA-Ari-08
85 O'Connell, Jake	TE	6-3	250	1	Miami (OH)	D7b-09	D7b-KC-09
13 Payne, Logan	WR	6-2	205	2	Minnesota	FA-09	FA-Sea-07
45 Pope, Leonard	TE	6-8	264	4	Georgia	FA-09	D3-Ari-06
83 Urban, Jerheme	WR	6-3	207	6	Trinity	FA-Ari-10	FA-Sea-03
84 Williams, Chandler	WR	5-11	176	1	Florida International	FA-09	D7-Min-07

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
76 Albert, Branden	T	6-5	316	2	Virginia	D1b-08	D1b-KC-08
61 Brown, Colin	G	6-7	335	1	Missouri	D5-09	D5-KC-09
66 Harris, Darryl	G	6-4	300	1	Mississippi	FA-09	FA-KC-09
65 Lilja, Ryan	G	6-2	290	6	Kansas State	FA-Ind-10	FA-KC-04
60 Ndukwe, Ikechuku	G/T	6-4	325	3	Northwestern	T-Mia-09	FA-NO-05
64 Niswanger, Rudy	C	6-5	301	4	LSU	FA-06	FA-KC-06
75 O'Callaghan, Ryan	T	6-7	330	4	California	W-NE-09	D5-NE-06
77 Porter, Jermail	T	6-5	310	1	Kent State	FA-09	FA-NE-09
67 Richardson, Barry	T	6-6	319	2	Clemson	D6a-08	D6a-KC-08
54 Waters, Brian	G	6-3	320	10	North Texas	FA-00	FA-Dal-99
62 Wiegmann, Casey	C	6-2	285	14	Iowa	FA-Den-10	FA-Ind-96

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72 Dorsey, Glenn	DE	6-1	297	2	LSU	D1a-08	D1a-KC-08
95 Edwards, Ron	DT	6-3	315	9	Texas A&M	FA-Buf-06	D3-Buf-01
70 Gales, Dion	DL	6-5	259	1	Troy	FA-09	FA-KC-09
92 Gilberry, Wallace	DE	6-2	268	2	Alabama	FA-08	FA-NYG-08
65 Greenwood, Bobby	DE	6-5	278	1	Alabama	FA-09	FA-KC-09
94 Jackson, Tyson	DE	6-4	296	1	LSU	D1-09	D1-KC-09
69 Lokey, Derek	DT	6-1	300	1	Texas	FA-09	FA-KC-08
71 Magee, Alex	DE	6-3	298	1	Purdue	D3-09	D3-KC-09
90 Smith, Shaun	DT	6-2	325	6	South Carolina	FA-Cin-10	FA-Dal-03

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
59 Belcher, Jovan	LB	6-2	228	1	Maine	FA-09	FA-KC-09
91 Hali, Tamba	LB	6-3	275	4	Penn State	D1-06	D1-KC-06
52 Herron, David	LB	6-1	239	2	Michigan State	FA-09	FA-Min-07
56 Johnson, Derrick	LB	6-3	242	5	Texas	D1-05	D1-KC-05
51 Mays, Corey	LB	6-1	245	4	Notre Dame	FA-09	FA-NE-06
96 Studebaker, Andy	LB	6-3	248	2	Wheaton	FA-08	D6-Phi-08
50 Vrabel, Mike	LB	6-4	261	13	Ohio State	T-NE-09	D3-Pit-97
97 Walters, Pierre	LB	6-5	269	1	Eastern Illinois	FA-09	FA-KC-09
53 Williams, Demorrio	LB	6-1	232	6	Nebraska	FA-Atl-08	D4-Atl-04

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Bates, Jackie	CB	5-10	180	1	Hampton	FA-09	FA-KC-09
30 Brown, Mike	S	5-10	207	10	Nebraska	FA-Chi-09	D2-Chi-00
39 Carr, Brandon	CB	6-0	207	2	Grand Valley State	D5-08	D5-KC-08
34 Daniels, Travis	CB	6-1	195	5	LSU	FA-09	D4-Mia-05
24 Flowers, Brandon	CB	5-9	187	2	Virginia Tech	D2-08	D2-KC-08
48 Langford, Reshard	S	6-1	213	1	Vanderbilt	FA-09	FA-Phi-09
31 Leggett, Maurice	CB/S	5-11	188	2	Valdosta State	FA-08	FA-KC-08
47 McGraw, Jon	S	6-3	208	8	Kansas State	FA-Det-07	D2-NYJ-02
38 Morgan, DaJuan	S	6-0	203	2	NC State	D3c-08	D3c-KC-08
44 Page, Jarrad	S	6-0	225	4	UCLA	D7-06	D7-KC-06
35 Price, Ricky	S	6-1	195	1	Oklahoma State	FA-09	FA-KC-09
23 Richardson, Mike	CB	5-11	190	3	Notre Dame	FA-09	D6-NE-07
20 Washington, Donald	CB	6-1	197	1	Ohio State	D4-09	D4-KC-09

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
2 Colquitt, Dustin	P	6-3	210	5	Tennessee	D3-05	D3-KC-05
43 Gafford, Thomas	LS	6-2	250	2	Houston	FA-09	FA-GB-06
6 Succop, Ryan	K	6-2	218	1	South Carolina	D7c-09	D7c-KC-09

Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	82	Dwayne Bowe
	22	Dexter McCluster (R)
WR	84	Chris Chambers
	83	Jerheme Urban
LT	76	Branden Albert
	67	Barry Richardson
LG	54	Brian Waters
	73	Jon Asamoah (R)
C	64	Rudy Niswanger
	62	Casey Wiegmann
RG	65	Ryan Lilja
	73	Jon Asamoah (R)
RT	75	Ryan O'Callaghan
	60	Ikechuku Ndukwe
TE	87	Brad Cottam
	81	Tony Moeaki (R)
QB	7	Matt Cassel
	12	Brodie Croyle
FB	42	Mike Cox
	46	Tim Castille
RB	25	Jamaal Charles
	20	Thomas Jones

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	72	Glenn Dorsey
	92	Wallace Gilberry
NT	95	Ron Edwards
	90	Shaun Smith
DE	94	Tyson Jackson
	71	Alex Magee
OLB	91	Tamba Hali
	59	Jovan Belcher
ILB	56	Derrick Johnson
	53	Demorrio Williams
ILB	51	Corey Mays
	97	Pierre Walters
OLB	50	Mike Vrabel
	96	Andy Studebaker
CB	24	Brandon Flowers
	30	Javier Arenas (R)
CB	39	Brandon Carr
	31	Maurice Leggett
SS	29	Eric Berry (R)
	49	Kendrick Lewis (R)
FS	44	Jarrad Page
	47	Jon McGraw

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Ryan Succop
KR	30	Javier Arenas (R)
P	2	Dustin Colquitt
PR	30	Javier Arenas (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Todd Haley
Assistant Head Coach: Maurice Carthon
Offensive Coordinator: Charlie Weis
Defensive Coordinator: Romeo Crennel
Special Teams: Steve Hoffman
Wide Receivers: Richie Anderson
Tight Ends: Bernie Parmalee
Offensive Line: Bill Muir
Assistant Offensive Line: Pat Perles
Offensive Quality Control: Nick Sirianni
Defensive Line: Anthony Pleasant
Linebackers: Gary Gibbs
Defensive Backs: Emmitt Thomas
Def. Asst./Asst. Linebackers: Adam Zimmer
Defensive Quality Control: Otis Smith
Strength and Conditioning: Mike Clark
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Brent Salazar
Assistant to the Head Coach: Field Yates

FANTASY FLASH

Wide receiver **Chris Chambers**, who played in only nine games for the Chiefs last year, nevertheless led the team in receiving yardage (608) and tied for the team lead in touchdowns (four). *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(4–12)*

Sept. 13	at Baltimore		L	24–38
Sept. 20	Oakland		L	10–13
Sept. 27	at Philadelphia		L	14–34
Oct. 4	N.Y. Giants		L	16–27
Oct. 11	Dallas	(ot)	L	20–26
Oct. 18	at Washington		W	14– 6
Oct. 25	San Diego		L	7–37
Nov. 8	at Jacksonville		L	21–24
Nov. 15	at Oakland		W	16–10
Nov. 22	Pittsburgh	(ot)	W	27–24
Nov. 29	at San Diego		L	14–43
Dec. 6	Denver		L	13–44
Dec. 13	Buffalo		L	10–16
Dec. 20	Cleveland		L	34–41
Dec. 27	at Cincinnati		L	10–17
Jan. 3	at Denver		W	44–24

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 13	San Diego (Mon.)	10:15 pm
Sept. 19	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	San Francisco	1:00 pm
Week 4	BYE	
Oct. 10	at Indianapolis	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at Houston	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	at Oakland	4:15 pm
Nov. 14	at Denver	4:05 pm
Nov. 21	Arizona	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Seattle	4:05 pm
Dec. 5	Denver	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at San Diego	4:15 pm
Dec. 19	at St. Louis	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Tennessee	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Oakland	1:00 pm

oakland RAIDERS

2 AFC WEST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER: Al Davis
STADIUM: Oakland Coliseum (63,026)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.raiders.com
TICKETS: 800-724-3377
TRAINING CAMP: Napa, Calif.

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	4
2006	2
2007	4
2008	5
2009	5

RAIDERS DE RICHARD SEYMOUR

The snarling Oakland Raiders used to treat each NFL game like D-Day. Now it's more like Groundhog Day. The team that once partied Saturday night, then whipped your butt on Sunday has become a reliable double-digit loser and quite probably the most dysfunctional franchise in the league. Al Davis' hope springs eternal, but his team is once again surrounded by questions as it heads into the 2010 season. Both sides of the line have questions, the first-round draft pick from 2009 has yet to prove he has NFL-caliber hands and the team's best player, cornerback Nnamdi Asomugha, somehow was involved in trade rumors over the offseason.

At least Oakland addressed its biggest issue, the quarterback position, by trading for Washington's Jason Campbell on Day 3 of the NFL Draft. Raider Nation was elated that this spelled the end of JaMarcus Russell, whose failure as an NFL quarterback has haunted this team for most of the past three years.

COACHES Yes, Tom Cable is still in Oakland. After last season ended, it seemed a foregone conclusion he would be fired. Then he started showing up at league functions. He never got an official affirmation from Davis, nor did he get a pink slip. Last year, the amazingly resilient head coach survived multiple allegations of assault, a civil case, a quarterback controversy and historically bad offensive production. Now his challenge may come from within. Davis hired Hue Jackson as his new offensive coordinator, and many believe Jackson is being groomed as a replacement. Cable will relinquish playcalling to Jackson, and he intimated in April that even his beloved zone-blocking scheme is on the table. Jackson is credited with helping to groom Joe Flacco in Baltimore, so perhaps he can help improve the Raiders' quarterback position. On defense, coordinator John Marshall became something of a hero to Raiders fans because of his willingness to blitz, which usually is taboo in Oakland. Marshall even — cover your ears, Mr. Davis — played some zone coverage in 2009. ***GRADE: C***

QUARTERBACKS Trading for Campbell completely changed the face of the quarterback position in Oakland. Campbell isn't exactly an NFL superstar; the Redskins soured on him because he wasn't accurate enough in the West Coast offense. But tall, mobile and strong-armed, he could be well suited to the Raiders' run-run-bomb approach. And he certainly seems to be a major upgrade over Russell, who was released in early May. The Raiders didn't promise Campbell the starting job when they acquired him, but everyone assumes he'll wind up with it, especially considering that one of his rivals — Bruce Gradkowski, who outplayed Russell last year — tore his non-throwing pectoral muscle in April and won't see the field until summer. Charlie Frye and former Cal star Kyle Boller could also be in the mix. ***GRADE: B-***

RUNNING BACKS The Raiders liked to talk about their three-headed monster at running back, but they chopped off one of their heads this year, releasing veteran Justin Fargas. That will mean more carries for a pair of young backs, the speedy Darren McFadden and the bruising Michael Bush. Is either ready for a full-time load? Bush has been the more consistent of the two but has never seemed to be in favor under either Lane Kiffin or Cable. McFadden has shown exceptional receiving skills but has also fumbled and gotten hurt too frequently; a former No. 4 overall pick, he's getting precariously close to "bust" territory. Oren O'Neal was cut in late April, so the fullback position will be interesting while Luke Lawton serves a four-game suspension for a positive steroid test. Marcel Reece could be the frontrunner. ***GRADE: B***

RECEIVERS It's easy to isolate Russell's shortcomings, but you have to cut him some slack on one point: His wide receivers were more hindrance than help. The Raiders still like Chaz Schilens, a reliable pass-catcher who lacks elite speed. Beyond him, the main targets are a pair of 2009 rookies who combined to drop 15 passes last year. At least Louis Murphy made some big plays, too; he looks like a keeper. No. 1 pick Darrius Heyward-Bey dropped six balls and caught only nine, looking utterly devoid of confidence most of the year. There is little production off the bench, though it will be interesting to watch lightning-fast rookie Jacoby Ford in the slot. The silver lining is at tight end, maybe Oakland's strongest position. Zach Miller (66 catches in 2009) might be a Pro Bowler if he played in a more potent passing offense. Tony Stewart is a commendable blocker and special teams player, and second-year guy Brandon Myers was a great find in the sixth round. ***GRADE: D***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Raiders drafted a pair of intriguing tackle prospects in Jared Veldheer and Bruce Campbell. But Veldheer comes from a tiny program (Hillsdale College in Michigan), and Campbell needs major work with his technique, so it's hard to imagine either will

Seymour: Peter Brouillet; Asomugha: Kirby Lee/US Presswire

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Short List of Pro Bowlers Could Rolando McClain become the best inside linebacker in Raiders history? That sounds like typical draft-day hyperbole, but the bar isn't set high. Despite this franchise's rich history, only one inside linebacker — Matt Millen in 1988 — has ever made the Pro Bowl.

Sum of Their Parts The Raiders' wide receivers put up strong numbers in 2009 — if you consider them collectively. As a group, Oakland's wideouts caught 99 passes for 1,363 yards and seven touchdowns. Six NFL receivers had more receptions by themselves, 19 had more touchdowns and Houston's Andre Johnson had more yardage (1,569).

He's Tired After a Bay Area columnist sarcastically wrote that JaMarcus Russell was treated for "lethargy addiction" this offseason, a San Francisco sports anchor went on the air and reported the nugget as fact. If it were any player other than the overpaid, overweight and underperforming Russell, you'd have to think the joke would have been immediately apparent.

A Napoleon Complex? Since 1924, three men named Napoleon have played in the NFL. All three have been Raiders: Napoleon McCallum, Napoleon Kaufman and Napoleon Harris.

2009 STATS

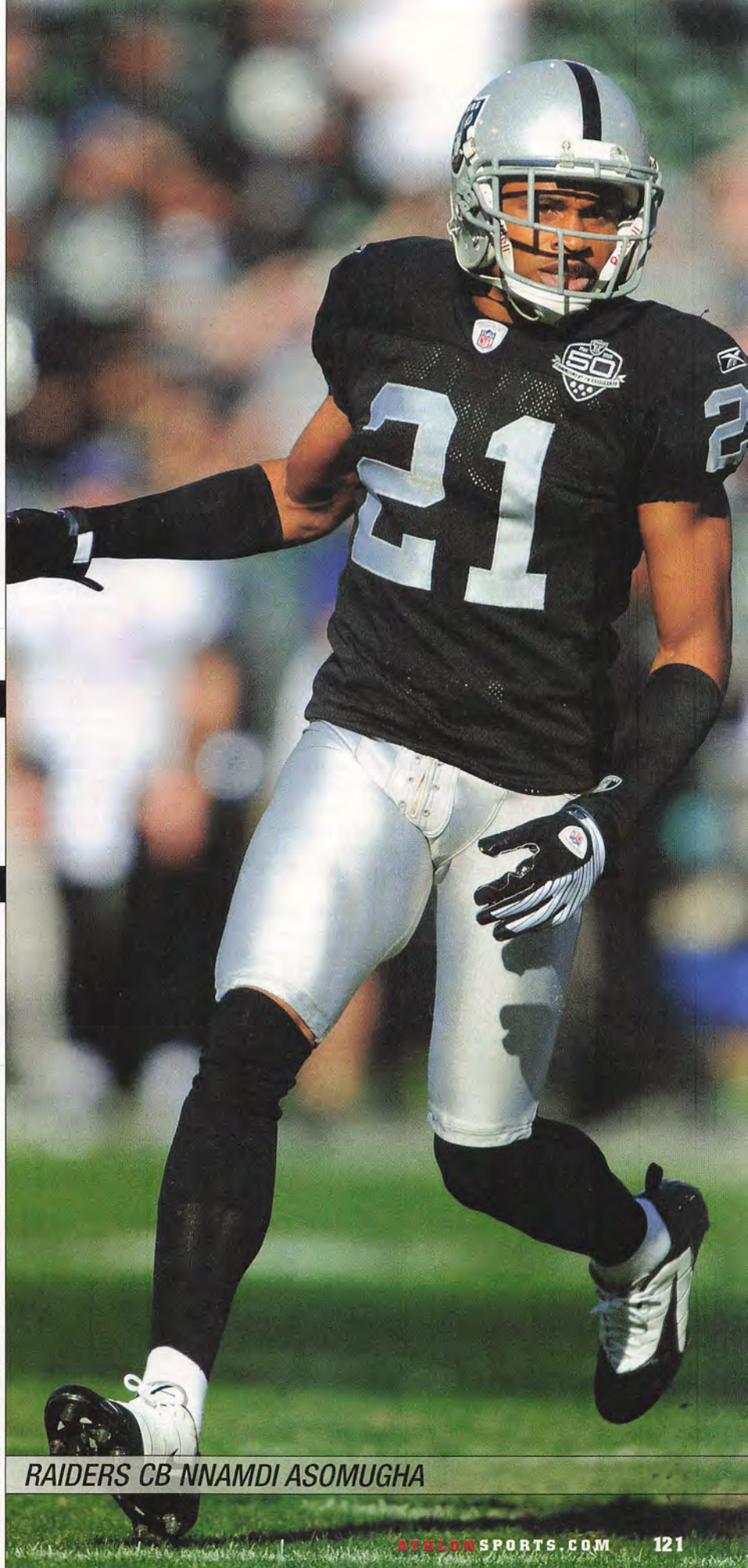
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	266.1	31	15
Rushing	106.3	21	13
Passing	159.8	29	13
Scoring	12.3	31	16
Punt Returns	4.9	29	16
Kick Returns	18.2	32	16
Red Zone TD %	41.4	29	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	361.9	26	13
Rushing	155.5	29	14
Passing	206.4	7	5
Scoring	23.7	23	12
Interceptions	8	T31	16
Sacks	37	T11	5
Turnover Differential	-13	T30	16

SCOUTING THE RAIDERS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP OAKLAND

"They made a good move to get Jason Campbell. He's got a better chance of treading water with a life preserver than JaMarcus Russell did. At least he knows how to swim. ... Jason is the perfect quarterback for what they want to do. ... As dysfunctional as they have been in the past, I think the addition of Jason Campbell, depending on how that works out and what they do with him, I think these guys have a chance. ... From a leadership perspective, I didn't understand trading Kirk Morrison. He's a leader on a team starving for leadership. They'd like Nnamdi Asomugha to be that guy, but he's a corner. You can't be a leader when you're isolated on one side of the field with a receiver. ... The league needs the Raiders to be good. We need villains. But behind the scenes, I just don't know if they're all pulling together. That's why nobody wants to coach there."



RAIDERS CB NNAMDI ASOMUGHA

have much of an impact in 2010. That leaves the Raiders with a veteran line that was substandard, especially in pass protection, last year. Curiously, the best of the bunch is Robert Gallery, who was considered a bust at tackle but has turned into an ornery, capable left guard when healthy. Mario Henderson continues to improve at left tackle, but right tackle now falls to Khalif Barnes, who was injured for all of 2009. Right guard Cooper Carlisle looks to be on the downside of his career, and Samson Satele is the starting center almost by default. ***GRADE: D+***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN When the Raiders drafted Lamarr Houston in the second round and immediately called him an end rather than a tackle, it fueled speculation that the team was moving toward a 3-4 system. It's not a bad idea because there isn't much depth up front. Richard Seymour played very well, if unevenly, in his first year as a Raider, which is why the team hit him with the franchise tag. After that, there's a big drop-off. Oakland really likes two second-year players, end Matt Shaughnessy and tackle Desmond Bryant, and Houston should help the run defense, but all three are still learning — a task that becomes more difficult without veterans Greg Ellis and Gerard Warren to mimic. The Raiders have been horrible against the run for years — they ranked 29th last year — and part of the blame must fall on tackle Tommy Kelly, who hasn't played up to his huge contract. If Oakland goes to a 3-4, some question whether Kelly can play nosetackle. ***GRADE: C+***

LINEBACKERS When the Raiders opened against the Chargers in Week 1 last year, their starting linebackers were Kirk Morrison, Thomas Howard and Ricky Brown. None is likely to start against the Titans on Sept. 12. Howard and Brown are now backups, and the popular Morrison was traded to Jacksonville. Trevor Scott, a talented third-year player, moved from defensive end to weak-side linebacker last year and will start there again in 2010. New to the strong side is trade acquisition Kamerion Wimbley. Scott and Wimbley give the Raiders dangerous edge rushers, making it likely Marshall will be given the green light to blitz again. In the middle, there is tremendous pressure on rookie Rolando McClain of Alabama. It's unfair to expect one man to completely revamp a team's run defense, but that's basically what McClain faces. The Raiders took him higher than they've ever taken a linebacker (eighth overall), and he made Morrison expendable. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Davis has always prized fast, aggressive defensive backs, and he has to be happy with where his team stands in that regard. Left corner Chris Johnson is up and down in coverage, but playing opposite the brilliant Asomugha, who is rarely tested by opposing quarterbacks, is a perilous task. The Raiders surprised a lot of people by tendering restricted free agent Stanford Routt at the first- and third-round level, meaning he'll get a base salary of $3.268 million. That's starter money, which would indicate he'll get a chance to compete with Johnson. Expect Johnson to retain his job, though. The Raiders have a number of capable deep men, if no true standout. Free safety Michael Huff was the most improved player on the team last year, finally justifying a portion of the money he earned as the No. 7 overall pick in 2006. Davis absolutely loves third-year player Tyvon Branch, a ferocious tackler (if dubious cover guy) at strong safety, and second-year man Mike Mitchell is cut from the same cloth. ***GRADE: B+***

SPECIALISTS The Raiders had Pro Bowl special teamers in punter Shane Lechler and long snapper Jon Condo, and kicker Sebastian Janikowski easily could have joined them if this team had a higher-scoring offense. In other words, Oakland's kicking game is in great shape. Now it falls to Ford to rescue the return game. Oakland finished dead last in kickoff returns (18.2-yard average) and 29th in punt returns (4.9) last season, a state of affairs that could not continue. Ford ran the fastest 40-yard dash (4.28 seconds) at the 2010 Scouting Combine and promises to bring some explosiveness to the task. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Kyle Boller	QB	St. Louis	Greg Ellis	DE	Free agent
Jason Campbell	QB	Washington	Justin Fargas	RB	Free agent
Chris Cooper	DT	None	Cornell Green	OT	Buffalo
Quentin Groves	DE	Jacksonville	Kirk Morrison	LB	Jacksonville
Kamerion Wimbley	LB	Cleveland	JaMarcus Russell	QB	Free agent
			Javon Walker	WR	Free agent
			Gerard Warren	DT	New England

There was mass partying in downtown Oakland when the Raiders traded for Campbell. He had an up-and-down tenure in Washington but clearly is this team's most accomplished passer. Oakland also got a legitimate pass-rusher when it traded for Wimbley, and Groves and Cooper give the team depth on that side of the ball. Meanwhile, Oakland relinquished a lot of leadership, cutting several veterans or simply choosing not to re-sign them. The biggest loss might be Ellis, who broke down game film for teammates and became a father figure on a club that has sorely lacked leadership.

FINAL ANALYSIS Opposing coaches and players — and the Raiders themselves — like to talk about how much speed and talent this team has. The underlying notion is that the Raiders possess an untapped wealth of potential and only have to get a taste of winning to turn the corner once and for all. That argument has worn thin over the years, but trading for Campbell and drafting a couple of run-stuffing defenders have restored some confidence. Still, if the Raiders are to get better, they will need major contributions from a lot of young guys. Are they ready? Since 2003, this team's annual record has been 4–12, 5–11, 4–12, 2–14, 4–12, 5–11 and 5–11. Expecting anything better than a .500 finish in 2010 seems overly optimistic.

Roc Fogel

OAKLAND IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Rolando McClain	ILB	6-3	255	Alabama
2. Lamarr Houston	DE	6-3	305	Texas
3. Jared Veldheer	T	6-8	315	Hillsdale
4. Bruce Campbell	T	6-6	315	Maryland
4. Jacoby Ford	WR	5-9	185	Clemson
5. Walter McFadden	CB	5-11	180	Auburn
6. Travis Goethel	LB	6-2	240	Arizona State
7. Jeremy Ware	CB	5-10	185	Michigan State
7. Stevie Brown	S	5-11	211	Michigan

Surprise, surprise: The Raiders did a good job filling needs in this draft — even if you don't count the draft-day trade for quarterback Jason Campbell. McClain and Houston should immediately upgrade the team's poor run defense. Ford might not be ready to step in as the Raiders' slot receiver on third down, but you can bet they'll take advantage of his blistering speed on punts and kickoffs. Oakland also believes it made great finds in physical standouts Veldheer and Campbell, though it's hard to imagine either one stepping into a starting role as a rookie. Campbell fell to the fourth round, though some expected the Raiders to take him in the first.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
7 Boller, Kyle	QB	6-3	218	7	California	FA-StL-10	D1-Bal-03
3 Frye, Charlie	QB	6-4	220	5	Akron	FA-Sea-09	D3-Cle-05
5 Gradkowski, Bruce	QB	6-1	220	4	Toledo	W-Cle-09	D6-TB-06
8 Campbell, Jason	QB	6-5	230	5	Auburn	T-Was-10	D1-Was-05
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
29 Bush, Michael	RB	6-1	245	2	Louisville	D4-07	D4-Oak-07
25 Cartwright, Rock	RB	5-8	213	8	Kansas State	FA-Was-10	D7-Was-02
44 Lawton, Luke	FB	6-0	240	4	McNeese State	FA-08	FA-Buf-04
20 McFadden, Darren	RB	6-2	210	2	Arkansas	D1-08	D1-Oak-08
45 Reece, Marcel	FB	6-2	240	1	Washington	FA-08	FA-Oak-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
10 Bodiford, Shaun	WR	5-11	185	3	Portland State	FA-09	FA-Det-06
13 Figurs, Yamon	WR	5-11	185	3	Kansas State	FA-09	D3-Bal-07
85 Heyward-Bey, Darrius	WR	6-2	210	1	Maryland	D1-09	D1-Oak-09
15 Higgins, Johnnie Lee	WR	5-11	185	3	UTEP	D3-07	D3-Oak-07
16 Hubbard, Paul	WR	6-2	225	1	Wisconsin	FA-09	D6-Cle-08
89 Miller, Nick	WR	5-9	180	1	Southern Utah	FA-09	FA-Oak-09
80 Miller, Zach	TE	6-5	255	3	Arizona State	D2-07	D2-Oak-07
18 Murphy, Louis	WR	6-2	200	1	Florida State	D4-09	D4-Oak-09
83 Myers, Brandon	TE	6-4	250	1	Iowa	D6-09	D6-Oak-09
82 Owens, John	TE	6-3	255	7	Notre Dame	FA-10	D5-Det-02
81 Schilens, Chaz	WR	6-4	225	2	San Diego State	D7-08	D7-Oak-08
86 Stewart, Tony	TE	6-5	260	9	Penn State	FA-Cin-07	D5-Phi-01
19 Watkins, Todd	WR	6-3	195	2	BYU	FA-08	D7-Ari-06
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
69 Barnes, Khalif	T	6-5	325	5	Washington	FA-Jac-09	D2-Jac-05
66 Carlisle, Cooper	G	6-5	295	10	Florida	FA-Den-07	D4-Den-00
76 Gallery, Robert	G	6-7	325	6	Iowa	D1-04	D1-Oak-04
75 Henderson, Mario	T	6-7	300	3	Florida State	D3-07	D3-Oak-07
51 Morris, Chris	C/G	6-4	305	4	Michigan State	D7-06	D7-Oak-06
72 Pears, Erik	T	6-8	305	4	Colorado State	FA-Den-09	FA-Den-05
63 Rodd, Brandon	G	6-4	305	1	Arizona State	FA-09	FA-Oak-08
64 Satele, Samson	C	6-3	300	3	Hawaii	T-Mia-09	D2-Mia-07
70 Walker, Langston	T	6-8	360	8	California	FA-09	D2-Oak-02
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
90 Bryant, Desmond	DT	6-5	290	1	Harvard	FA-09	FA-Oak-09
78 Cooper, Chris	DL	6-5	285	6	Nebraska-Omaha	FA-10	D6-Oak-01
52 Groves, Quentin	DE	6-3	264	2	Auburn	T-Jac-10	D2-Jac-08
94 Joseph, William	DT	6-5	310	6	Miami	FA-09	D1-NYG-03
93 Kelly, Tommy	DT	6-6	300	6	Mississippi State	FA-04	FA-Oak-04
98 Richardson, Jay	DE	6-6	280	3	Ohio State	D5-07	D5-Oak-07
92 Seymour, Richard	DE	6-6	310	9	Georgia	T-NE-09	D1-NE-01
77 Shaughnessy, Matt	DE	6-5	270	1	Wisconsin	D3-09	D3-Oak-09
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57 Brown, Ricky	LB	6-2	235	4	Boston College	FA-06	FA-Oak-06
50 Ekejiuba, Isaiah	LB	6-4	240	5	Virginia	FA-05	FA-Ari-05
53 Howard, Thomas	LB	6-3	240	4	UTEP	D2-06	D2-Oak-06
56 Nixon, David	LB	6-3	235	1	BYU	FA-09	FA-Oak-09
58 Norris, Slade	LB	6-3	245	1	Oregon State	D4b-09	D4b-Oak-09
91 Scott, Trevor	LB	6-5	255	2	Buffalo	D6-08	D6-Oak-08
96 Wimbley, Kamerion	LB	6-3	255	4	Florida State	T-Cle-10	D1-Cle-06
54 Williams, Sam	LB	6-5	260	7	Fresno State	D3-03	D3-Oak-03
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
21 Asomugha, Nnamdi	CB	6-2	210	7	California	D1-03	D1-Oak-03
33 Branch, Tyvon	S	6-0	205	2	Connecticut	D4-08	D4-Oak-08
31 Eugene, Hiram	S	6-2	200	4	Louisiana Tech	FA-06	FA-Oak-05
23 Holland, Jonathan	CB	6-1	185	2	Louisiana Tech	D7-07	D7-Oak-07
24 Huff, Michael	S	6-1	205	4	Texas	D1-06	D1-Oak-06
37 Johnson, Chris	CB	6-1	200	6	Louisville	FA-KC-07	D7-GB-03
34 Mitchell, Mike	S	6-1	220	1	Ohio	D2-09	D2-Oak-09
26 Routt, Stanford	CB	6-1	195	5	Houston	D2-05	D2-Oak-05
36 Thomas, Joey	CB	6-1	190	3	Montana State	FA-10	D3-GB-04
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
59 Condo, Jon	LS	6-3	250	4	Maryland	FA-06	FA-Dal-05
11 Janikowski, Sebastian	K	6-2	250	10	Florida State	D1-00	D1-Oak-00
9 Lechler, Shane	P	6-2	225	10	Texas A&M	D5-00	D5-Oak-00
1 Waters, Swayze	K	5-11	180	1	UAB	FA-10	FA-Det-09

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	81	Chaz Schilens
	18	Louis Murphy
WR	85	Darrius Heyward-Bey
	15	Johnnie Lee Higgins
LT	75	Mario Henderson
	72	Erik Pears
LG	76	Robert Gallery
	63	Brandon Rodd
C	64	Samson Satele
	51	Chad Morris
RG	66	Cooper Carlisle
	74	Bruce Campbell (R)
RT	69	Khalif Barnes
	68	Jared Veldheer (R)
TE	80	Zach Miller
	86	Tony Stewart
QB	8	Jason Campbell
	5	Bruce Gradkowski
FB	44	Luke Lawton
	45	Marcel Reece
RB	20	Darren McFadden
	29	Michael Bush

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	99	Lamarr Houston (R)
	77	Matt Shaughnessy
DT	93	Tommy Kelly
	78	Chris Cooper
DT	90	Desmond Bryant
	94	William Joseph
DE	92	Richard Seymour
	98	Jay Richardson
SLB	96	Kamerion Wimbley
	54	Sam Williams
MLB	55	Rolando McClain (R)
	57	Ricky Brown
WLB	91	Trevor Scott
	53	Thomas Howard
CB	21	Nnamdi Asomugha
	22	Walter McFadden (R)
CB	37	Chris Johnson
	26	Stanford Routt
SS	33	Tyvon Branch
	34	Mike Mitchell
FS	24	Michael Huff
	31	Hiram Eugene

SPECIALISTS

K	11	Sebastian Janikowski
KR	12	Jacoby Ford (R)
P	9	Shane Lechler
PR	12	Jacoby Ford (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Tom Cable
Offensive Coordinator: Hue Jackson
Defensive Coordinator: John Marshall
Special Teams Coordinator: John Fassel
Passing Game Coordinator: Ted Tollner
Quarterbacks: Paul Hackett
Running Backs: Kelly Skipper
Wide Receivers: Sanjay Lal
Tight Ends: Adam Henry
Offensive Line: Jim Michalczik
Assistant Offensive Line: Chris Morgan
Defensive Line: Mike Waufle
Linebackers: Mike Haluchak
Defensive Backs: Lionel Washington
Defensive Backs Assistant: Willie Brown
Strength and Conditioning: Brad Roll
Assistant Coach: Kevin Ross

FANTASY FLASH

In his third year, **Zach Miller** hauled in four or more balls on 10 occasions and led the Raiders with 66 catches for 805 yards. He was one of eight tight ends to lead his team in catches a year ago. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.Com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(5–11)*

Sept. 14	San Diego	L	20–24
Sept. 20	at Kansas City	W	13–10
Sept. 27	Denver	L	3–23
Oct. 4	at Houston	L	6–29
Oct. 11	at N.Y. Giants	L	7–44
Oct. 18	Philadelphia	W	13– 9
Oct. 25	N.Y. Jets	L	0–38
Nov. 1	at San Diego	L	16–24
Nov. 15	Kansas City	L	10–16
Nov. 22	Cincinnati	W	20–17
Nov. 26	at Dallas	L	7–24
Dec. 6	at Pittsburgh	W	27–24
Dec. 13	Washington	L	13–34
Dec. 20	at Denver	W	20–19
Dec. 27	at Cleveland	L	9–23
Jan. 3	Baltimore	L	13–21

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	St. Louis	4:05 pm
Sept. 26	at Arizona	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	Houston	4:05 pm
Oct. 10	San Diego	4:15 pm
Oct. 17	at San Francisco	4:05 pm
Oct. 24	at Denver	4:15 pm
Oct. 31	Seattle	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	Kansas City	4:15 pm
Week 10	BYE	
Nov. 21	at Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Miami	4:05 pm
Dec. 5	at San Diego	4:05 pm
Dec. 12	at Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Denver	4:15 pm
Dec. 26	Indianapolis	4:05 pm
Jan. 2	at Kansas City	1:00 pm

san diego CHARGERS

1 AFC WEST FORECAST

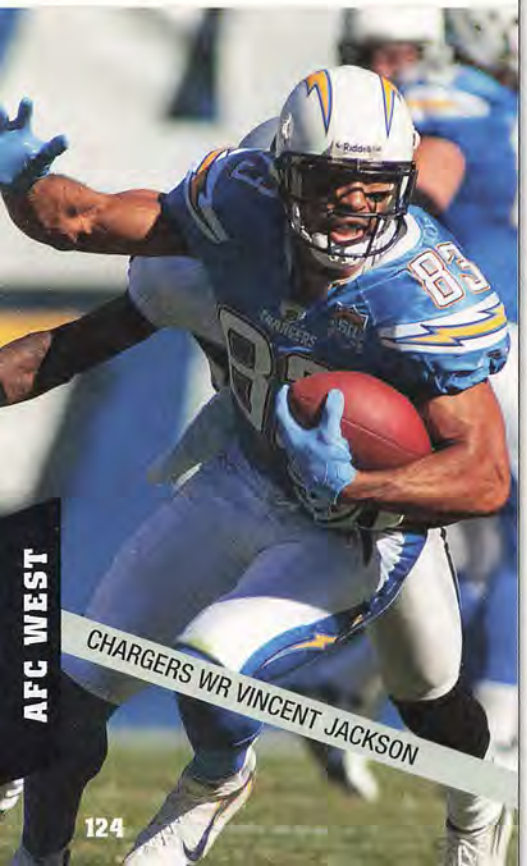
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Alex G. Spanos
GENERAL MANAGER: A.J. Smith
STADIUM: Qualcomm Stadium (71,500)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.chargers.com
TICKETS: 877-242-7437
TRAINING CAMP: Chargers Park (San Diego, Calif.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	9	
2006	14	PLAYOFFS
2007	11	PLAYOFFS
2008	8	PLAYOFFS
2009	13	PLAYOFFS

PLAYOFFS *Playoffs*



CHARGERS WR VINCENT JACKSON

Jackson, Rivers: Peter Brouillet

San Diego moves on without LaDainian Tomlinson, whose nine-year run as the face of the franchise ended in the offseason due to age and salary cap concerns. The Chargers will try to win their fifth straight AFC West title behind a supercharged offense led by quarterback Philip Rivers, tight end Antonio Gates and wide receivers Vincent Jackson and Malcom Floyd. They're also looking to reestablish a defensive identity behind outside linebacker Shawne Merriman, who wasn't the same old "Lights Out" last year as he returned from knee surgery.

The Super Bowl remains an elusive goal for the Chargers, who have lost three of their last four playoff games, including a mystifying pratfall against the Jets. The window of opportunity hasn't closed on the Bolts, but it's certainly getting smaller for Southern California's only NFL team.

Some people, including some opposing coaches, continue to insist that San Diego is the NFL's most talented team. That might be the case, but it hasn't translated into recent success in January.

COACHES The Chargers quietly gave coach Norv Turner a three-year contract extension through 2013 a day after the playoff loss to the Jets. A large segment of the Chargers fan base still hasn't warmed to Turner after three years, and getting outcoached by Rex Ryan in the playoffs didn't help his cause. Supporters point out Turner's three straight AFC West titles and 3–3 playoff record with the Chargers. Detractors point out that while he did get the Chargers to the AFC title game following the 2007 season, he has failed to get to the Super Bowl with a team that was 14–2 the year before he replaced Marty Schottenheimer. Defensive coordinator Ron Rivera uses aggressive schemes. Offensive coordinator Clarence Shelmon helps with the gameplan, but Turner calls the plays on Sundays. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS Rivers has solidly established the Chargers as a passing team and himself as one of the NFL's elite quarterbacks. Although the addition of rookie running back Ryan Mathews from Fresno State will give the Chargers some balance, they're not about to veer away from their high-octane passing game. In fact, Rivers' status as one of the game's best quarterbacks means Mathews won't carry quite the burden Tomlinson did when he was a rookie in 2001 and the Chargers were awful. Rivers will be looking for his third straight 4,000-yard season, something only Hall of Famer Dan Fouts has accomplished in San Diego. Rivers has settled in nicely as the team's leader and seems to do less yapping at opponents. Billy Volek remains the solid backup, although he doesn't see much action. The Chargers traded third-stringer Charlie Whitehurst to Seattle and drafted Tennessee's Jonathan Crompton to be his successor. In a perfect world, Crompton will never take a snap for the Chargers. ***GRADE: A***

RUNNING BACKS Tomlinson is out and Mathews, who led the Football Bowl Subdivision in rushing at 150.7 yards per game in 2009, is in. The Chargers liked Mathews so much that they spent big-time to move up 16 spots in the draft to take him 12th overall. The Chargers view Mathews as a fresh set of legs with a between-the-tackles style to replace Tomlinson, who had clearly lost a step and, coincidentally, was Mathews' idol growing up. Mathews has been wearing No. 21 since he was a sophomore in high school. He won't be getting Tomlinson's old number, but he will get the chance to prove that the Chargers' belief that he is a complete back is accurate. Speedy little Darren Sproles returns for at least one more season. The Chargers still intend to use him as a third down back, a receiver out of the backfield and a return specialist — but not the every-down back Sproles thinks he can be. Fullbacks Jacob Hester and Mike Tolbert get a touch or two most games, but they are blockers first and foremost. ***GRADE: B+***

RECEIVERS The receiving corps is clearly the team's strongest unit. There are times when the Chargers can seemingly score at will, and Gates, Jackson and Floyd are almost always involved. Gates, now a six-time Pro Bowl tight end following a season in which he had a career-best 1,157 yards on 79 catches, still gives defensive coordinators headaches trying to figure out how to cover him. The 6'5" Jackson can jump up and get anything that Rivers throws in his general vicinity. Jackson played in the Pro Bowl for the first time and will be looking for his third straight 1,000-yard season. However, he's also expected to be suspended for a game or two by the NFL after a second DUI conviction. Gates and Jackson became the first Chargers receiving duo to top 1,000 yards apiece since Lionel James and Wes Chandler in 1985, and their 2,324 combined yards were the most by two Chargers since Kellen

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Rivers Rolls to the Mound Philip Rivers is so popular in San Diego that the Padres invited him to throw out the ceremonial first pitch before their 2010 home opener. Rivers and his family watched the game from co-owner Jeff Moorad's luxury box.

Is it the Holiday Cheer? The Chargers have won an NFL-record 18 straight games in December, tied for the most consecutive wins in any calendar month. (Miami won 18 straight November games in 1970-74). The streak began in 2006 under Marty Schottenheimer. The Chargers get a break in their attempt to keep the streak going — a three-game homestand against Oakland, Kansas City and San Francisco and a trip to Cincinnati. The Chargers have closed the last four seasons on winning streaks of 10, six, four and 11 games, respectively.

Merriman's Recovery Shawne Merriman was the Chargers' recipient of the Ed Block Courage Award. Merriman had reconstructive knee surgery following the 2008 season opener. He was back in the lineup in 2009, getting four sacks. It was Merriman's lowest sack total in five full seasons, but he knew going in that he wouldn't be 100 percent.

2009 STATS

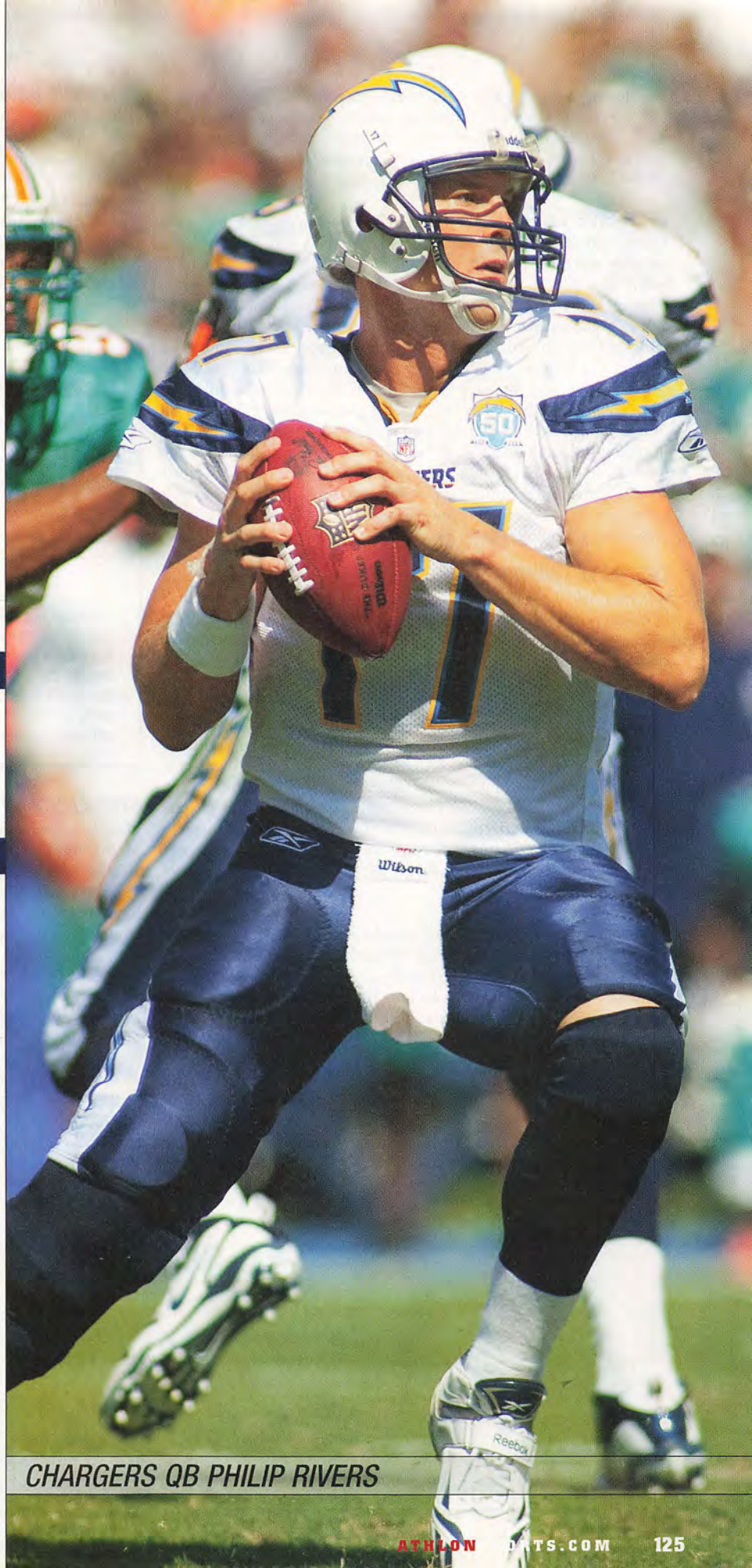
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	360.1	10	5
Rushing	88.9	31	15
Passing	271.1	5	4
Scoring	28.4	4	1
Punt Returns	7.0	22	11
Kick Returns	22.9	14	7
Red Zone TD %	54.0	10	4

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	327.0	16	8
Rushing	117.8	20	10
Passing	209.2	11	7
Scoring	20.0	11	6
Interceptions	14	T20	T12
Sacks	35	T13	6
Turnover Differential	+8	6	2

SCOUTING THE CHARGERS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP SAN DIEGO

"Ryan Mathews is a good player, but to go that high (No. 12 overall) for him? He's not the same type of running back that LaDainian Tomlinson was in his prime, and he's not the same type of guy as Darren Sproles, either. He doesn't have their lateral quickness. He's a chain-mover. It's going to be interesting to see how they do relying on a guy like that. … I like Philip Rivers. I like what he's been able to do for them. There were plenty of times when they could have folded and gone in the tank. He's a fighter. He just doesn't quit. … The combination of Marty Schottenheimer and Cam Cameron, getting rid of those guys, that was their mistake. They've never duplicated what they did. The reputation he has as an offensive coach, Norv Turner has still never matched what Marty and Cam did. That was a major, major organizational faux pas. … On a consistent basis the last five years, there has been no better team, talent-wise, than the San Diego Chargers."



CHARGERS QB PHILIP RIVERS

Winslow and John Jefferson in 1980. Floyd isn't at Jackson's level, but he's also 6'5" and can make big plays. Sproles actually was the team's third-leading receiver, tied with Floyd, and can bust a long one, too. Veteran wideouts Legedu Naanee and Craig Davis provide solid depth. ***GRADE: A***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Above all, this group is looking for good health. Left tackle Marcus McNeill and left guard Kris Dielman were the only offensive linemen who made every start last year. McNeill rolled an ankle in the season opener and had to stay in the game because there were no backups left. Center Nick Hardwick sprained an ankle in the opener and missed the next 13 games. Right tackle Jeromey Clary missed the final six games with an ankle injury. The injuries did provide valuable playing time to players such as Scott Mruczkowski and Brandyn Dombrowski. Mruczkowski filled in admirably for Hardwick until he suffered a season-ending ankle injury in mid-December, and Dombrowski started two games at right guard in place of rookie Louis Vasquez early in the season, then started the final six at right tackle after Clary got hurt. Rivers' numbers didn't seem to suffer, but the injuries contributed to problems in the running game. This is a talented line, but it would be a lot more evident if the players weren't ailing. ***GRADE: B+***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Chargers hope that rookie Cam Thomas will eventually become the replacement for departed nosetackle Jamal Williams — and the quicker the better. Williams was the run-stuffing anchor of San Diego's defense for the better part of a decade, but he suffered a season-ending arm injury in the opener last year that the Chargers never really recovered from, and now he has moved on to division rival Denver. The Chargers drafted Thomas in the fifth round and will throw him into the mix along with Ogemdi Nwagbuo and Ian Scott. As is the case on offense, the Chargers would love to find some consistency up front. A revolving door across the line worked for a portion of the season, but injuries limited this group's effectiveness. Even though they each had a solid season, ends Luis Castillo and Jacques Cesaire will be more effective if the Chargers can get a strong presence in the middle. The Chargers welcome back Ryon Bingham, who can play either end or tackle and missed all of last season with an arm injury. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS This is the group that defines the Chargers' defensive identity, and last year it hardly overwhelmed. Merriman might have moved on by now if not for the uncapped year, and this is perhaps his final season in San Diego. He's looking to regain the form that led to 39.5 sacks in his first three seasons. He had four last year as he returned from knee surgery that cost him the majority of the 2008 season. On the other side, Shaun Phillips (seven sacks) is now best known as the guy who head-butted a Jets player in the playoffs. Larry English remains in waiting, perhaps as Merriman's eventual replacement. Brandon Siler and Stephen Cooper do a solid job inside, where rookie Donald Butler is expected to add some depth, especially considering the Chargers gave up two draft picks to move up in the third round and grab him. ***GRADE: B+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS This is always an interesting group, one that's either reviled or revered (often the former). Antonio Cromartie went from having 10 interceptions in 2007 to freezing up when New York's Shonn Greene hit the hole en route to a 53-yard touchdown run in the playoffs. Cromartie was shipped to the Jets a few weeks later, having become a liability both on the field and in the locker room. Antoine Cason, the team's 2008 first-round pick, has a chance to win Cromartie's job, although the team brought in cornerbacks Donald Strickland and Nathan Vasher to compete for the spot opposite the ever-solid Quentin Jammer. The Chargers drafted safety Darrell Stuckey of Kansas, perhaps to light a fire under Eric Weddle and Kevin Ellison. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Donald Strickland	CB	N.Y. Jets	Antonio Cromartie	CB	N.Y. Jets
Nathan Vasher	CB	Chicago	Tim Dobbins	ILB	Miami
			Brandon Manumaleuna	TE	Chicago
			Kassim Osgood	WR	Jacksonville
			LaDainian Tomlinson	RB	N.Y. Jets
			Charlie Whitehurst	QB	Seattle
			Jamal Williams	DT	Denver

The loss of Tomlinson, while certainly marking the end of one of the most exciting eras in Chargers history, opens the way for rookie Ryan Mathews to show what he's got. The loss of Williams might have a bigger impact; after he was shown the door by the Chargers, he was healthy enough that the Broncos signed him. Cromartie's three interceptions were hardly enough to keep him around after he seemingly became more interested in tweeting than hitting. Vasher and Strickland add depth to a unit that always seems to have some kind of flux going on.

SPECIALISTS All eyes will be on kicker Nate Kaeding after he inexplicably missed three field goal attempts in the Chargers' 17–14 playoff loss to the Jets. Kaeding's 87.2 regular-season percentage (150-of-172) is the best in NFL history, but his playoff record is a shaky 8-of-15. It will take another postseason opportunity for Kaeding to redeem himself. Punter Mike Scifres remains a tremendous asset with his booming kicks. The explosive Sproles returned a punt for a touchdown last season, and he has two punt and two kickoff returns for scores in his career. ***GRADE: A***

FINAL ANALYSIS An 11-game winning streak to end last season didn't mean anything once the Chargers were beaten by the Jets. The same will hold true this year, when winning the mediocre AFC West is almost a given. Avoiding another face-plant in the playoffs is what really matters to this team. The Chargers have gotten better about not talking openly about reaching the Super Bowl, but even that focus hasn't paid off. The fans who get fired up reading predictions of Super Bowl glory get really grumpy when their team gets sent home in the early rounds of the playoffs.

Peter Brouillet

SAN DIEGO IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Ryan Mathews	RB	5-11	220	Fresno State
3. Donald Butler	LB	6-1	245	Washington
4. Darrell Stuckey	SS	5-11	205	Kansas
5. Cam Thomas	DT	6-4	330	North Carolina
5. Jonathan Crompton	QB	6-3	222	Tennessee
7. Dedrick Epps	TE	6-3	250	Miami

GM A.J. Smith spent liberally to move up and get both Mathews and Butler. Mathews is expected to replace LaDainian Tomlinson. The Chargers like Butler because he can play both inside positions. Smith also moved up to grab Thomas, who is expected to be in the mix to replace Jamal Williams. The Chargers had been expected to take a defensive tackle with their second-round pick, but that was used in the deal to get Mathews. However, it turned out that Thomas was a good find in the fifth round, considering that many people projected him to go higher.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Rivers, Philip	QB	6-5	228	6	NC State	T-NYG-04	D1-NYG-04
7 Volek, Billy	QB	6-2	214	10	Fresno State	T-Ten-06	FA-Ten-00
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
22 Hester, Jacob	FB	5-11	235	2	LSU	D3-08	D3-SD-08
34 Latsko, Billy	FB	5-10	233	1	Florida	FA-09	FA-Car-07
29 Mason, Marcus	RB	5-9	215	2	Youngstown State	W-Was-10	FA-Was-07
43 Sproles, Darren	RB	5-6	185	5	Kansas State	D4-05	D4-SD-05
35 Tolbert, Mike	FB	5-9	243	2	Coastal Carolina	FA-08	FA-SD-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
12 Banks, Gary	WR	6-0	193	1	Troy	FA-09	FA-SD-08
84 Davis, Buster	WR	6-1	210	3	LSU	D1-07	D1-SD-07
80 Floyd, Malcom	WR	6-5	225	4	Wyoming	FA-04	FA-SD-04
85 Gates, Antonio	TE	6-4	260	7	Kent State	FA-03	FA-SD-03
83 Jackson, Vincent	WR	6-5	230	5	Northern Colorado	D2-05	D2-SD-05
11 Naanee, Legedu	WR	6-2	220	3	Boise State	D5-07	D5-SD-07
88 Wilson, Kris	TE	6-2	245	6	Pittsburgh	FA-08	D2-KC-04
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
75 Clark, Corey	T	6-5	325	1	Texas A&M	FA-09	D7-SD-08
66 Clary, Jeromey	T	6-6	320	3	Kansas State	D6a-06	D6a-SD-06
68 Dielman, Kris	G	6-4	320	7	Indiana	FA-03	FA-SD-03
62 Dombrowski, Brandyn	G/T	6-5	323	1	San Diego State	FA-08	FA-SD-08
69 Green, Tyronne	G	6-2	308	1	Auburn	D4b-09	D4b-SD-09
61 Hardwick, Nick	C	6-4	295	6	Purdue	D3b-04	D3b-SD-04
60 McDonald, Ryan	C	6-4	293	1	Illinois	FA-09	FA-SD-09
73 McNeill, Marcus	T	6-7	336	4	Auburn	D2-06	D2-SD-06
63 Mruczkowski, Scott	C/G	6-5	325	5	Bowling Green	D7-05	D7-SD-05
65 Vasquez, Louis	G	6-5	325	1	Texas Tech	D3-09	D3-SD-09
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
97 Bingham, Ryon	DL	6-3	303	5	Nebraska	D7a-04	D7a-SD-04
70 Boone, Alfonso	DE	6-3	305	9	Mt. San Antonio	FA-09	D7-Det-00
93 Castillo, Luis	DE	6-3	290	5	Northwestern	D1b-05	D1b-SD-05
74 Cesaire, Jacques	DE	6-2	295	7	S. Connecticut State	FA-03	FA-SD-03
71 Garay, Antonio	DT	6-4	320	4	Boston College	FA-09	D6-Cle-03
96 Johnson, Travis	DL	6-3	311	5	Florida State	T-Hou-09	D1-Hou-05
72 Jones, Derrick	DT	6-4	315	1	Grand Valley State	FA-09	FA-Pit-07
92 Martin, Vaughn	DL	6-4	320	1	Western Ontario	D4a-09	D4a-SD-09
91 Nwagbuo, Ogemdi	DL	6-4	303	1	Michigan State	FA-08	FA-NYG-08
98 Scott, Ian	DT	6-3	315	7	Florida	FA-09	D4-Chi-03
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
90 Applewhite, Antwan	OLB	6-3	246	2	San Diego State	FA-07	FA-SD-07
46 Beckwith, Darry	LB	6-0	234	1	LSU	FA-09	FA-SD-09
99 Burnett, Kevin	ILB	6-3	240	5	Tennessee	FA-Dal-09	D2-Dal-05
54 Cooper, Stephen	ILB	6-1	235	7	Maine	FA-03	FA-SD-03
52 English, Larry	OLB	6-2	255	1	Northern Illinois	D1-09	D1-SD-09
53 Holt, James	LB	6-2	223	1	Kansas	FA-09	FA-SD-09
56 Merriman, Shawne	OLB	6-4	265	5	Maryland	D1a-05	D1a-SD-05
95 Phillips, Shaun	OLB	6-3	262	6	Purdue	D4-04	D4-SD-04
59 Siler, Brandon	ILB	6-2	239	3	Florida	D7-07	D7-SD-07
94 Tucker, Jyles	OLB	6-3	258	3	Wake Forest	FA-07	FA-SD-07
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
20 Cason, Antoine	CB	6-0	190	2	Arizona	D1-08	D1-SD-08
25 Ellison, Kevin	SS	6-1	221	1	USC	D6-09	D6-SD-09
28 Gregory, Steve	SS	5-11	195	4	Syracuse	FA-06	FA-SD-06
36 Hughes, Brandon	CB	5-11	181	1	Oregon State	D5-09	D5-SD-09
24 Hughes, Dante	CB	5-10	190	3	California	FA-09	D3-Ind-07
23 Jammer, Quentin	CB	6-0	204	8	Texas	D1-02	D1-SD-02
27 Oliver, Paul	FS	5-10	210	3	Georgia	SD4-07	SD4-SD-07
41 Spillman, C.J.	FS	6-0	196	1	Marshall	FA-09	FA-SD-09
30 Strickland, Donald	CB	5-10	185	7	Colorado	FA-NYJ-10	D3-Ind-03
31 Vasher, Nathan	CB	5-10	187	6	Texas	FA-Chi-10	D4a-Chi-04
32 Weddle, Eric	FS	5-11	200	3	Utah	D2-07	D2-SD-07
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
50 Binn, David	LS	6-3	228	16	California	FA-94	FA-SD-94
10 Kaeding, Nate	K	6-0	187	6	Iowa	D3a-04	D3a-SD-04
5 Scifres, Mike	P	6-2	221	7	Western Illinois	D5-03	D5-SD-03

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	83	Vincent Jackson
	11	Legedu Naanee
WR	80	Malcom Floyd
	84	Craig Davis
LT	73	Marcus McNeill
	62	Brandyn Dombrowski
LG	68	Kris Dielman
	62	Brandyn Dombrowski
C	61	Nick Hardwick
	63	Scott Mruczkowski
RG	65	Louis Vasquez
	63	Scott Mruczkowski
RT	66	Jeromey Clary
	62	Brandyn Dombrowski
TE	85	Antonio Gates
	88	Kris Wilson
QB	17	Philip Rivers
	7	Billy Volek
FB	22	Jacob Hester
	35	Mike Tolbert
RB		Ryan Mathews (R)
	43	Darren Sproles

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	74	Jacques Cesaire
	70	Alfonso Boone
DT	91	Ogemdi Nwagbuo
		Cam Thomas (R)
DE	93	Luis Castillo
	97	Ryon Bingham
OLB	95	Shaun Phillips
	53	James Holt
ILB	54	Stephen Cooper
		Donald Butler (R)
ILB	59	Brandon Siler
	99	Kevin Burnett
OLB	56	Shawne Merriman
	52	Larry English
CB	23	Quentin Jammer
	30	Donald Strickland
CB	20	Antoine Cason
	31	Nathan Vasher
SS	25	Kevin Ellison
		Darrell Stuckey (R)
FS	32	Eric Weddle
	27	Paul Oliver

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Nate Kaeding	P	5	Mike Scifres
KR	43	Darren Sproles	PR	43	Darren Sproles

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Norv Turner
Offensive Coordinator: Clarence Shelmon
Defensive Coordinator: Ron Rivera
Special Teams: Steve Crosby
Quarterbacks: John Ramsdell
Running Backs: Ollie Wilson
Wide Receivers: Charlie Joiner
Tight Ends and Asst. Head Coach: Rob Chudzinski
Offensive Line: Hal Hunter
Offensive Line: Mike Sullivan
Defensive Line: Don Johnson
Linebackers: John Pagano
Asst. Linebackers: Greg Williams
Secondary: Steven Wilks
Asst. Secondary: Cris Dishman
Coaches Assistant/Football Analyst: Steve Gera
Strength and Conditioning: Jeff Hurd

FANTASY FLASH

Antonio Gates was the model of consistency for PPR owners last year, catching five or more passes 10 times. He had at least three catches in all but one game. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(13–3)*

Sept. 14	at Oakland	W	24–20
Sept. 20	Baltimore	L	26–31
Sept. 27	Miami	W	23–13
Oct. 4	at Pittsburgh	L	28–38
Oct. 19	Denver	L	23–34
Oct. 25	at Kansas City	W	37– 7
Nov. 1	Oakland	W	24–16
Nov. 8	at N.Y. Giants	W	21–20
Nov. 15	Philadelphia	W	31–23
Nov. 22	at Denver	W	32– 3
Nov. 29	Kansas City	W	43–14
Dec. 6	at Cleveland	W	30–23
Dec. 13	at Dallas	W	20–17
Dec. 20	Cincinnati	W	27–24
Dec. 25	at Tennessee	W	42–17
Jan. 3	Washington	W	23–20
Postseason			
Jan. 17	N.Y. Jets	L	14–17

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 13	at Kansas City	10:15 pm
Sept. 19	Jacksonville	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	at Seattle	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	Arizona	4:15 pm
Oct. 10	at Oakland	4:15 pm
Oct. 17	at St. Louis	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	New England	4:15 pm
Oct. 31	Tennessee	4:05 pm
Nov. 7	at Houston	1:00 pm
Week 10	BYE	
Nov. 22	Denver	8:30 pm
Nov. 28	at Indianapolis	8:20 pm
Dec. 5	Oakland	4:05 pm
Dec. 12	Kansas City	4:15 pm
Dec. 16	San Francisco	8:20 pm
Dec. 26	at Cincinnati	8:20 pm
Jan. 2	at Denver	4:15 pm

2010 NFL SCHEDULES

WEEK 1

Thursday, Sept. 9
Minnesota at New Orleans

Sunday, Sept. 12
Denver at Jacksonville
Miami at Buffalo
Detroit at Chicago
Indianapolis at Houston
Atlanta at Pittsburgh
Oakland at Tennessee
Cleveland at Tampa Bay
Carolina at N.Y. Giants
Cincinnati at New England
San Francisco at Seattle
Green Bay at Philadelphia
Arizona at St. Louis
Dallas at Washington

Monday, Sept. 13
Baltimore at N.Y. Jets
San Diego at Kansas City

WEEK 2

Sunday, Sept. 19
Arizona at Atlanta
Tampa Bay at Carolina
Kansas City at Cleveland
Philadelphia at Detroit
Pittsburgh at Tennessee
Miami at Minnesota
Baltimore at Cincinnati
Chicago at Dallas
Buffalo at Green Bay
St. Louis at Oakland
Seattle at Denver
Jacksonville at San Diego
New England at N.Y. Jets
Houston at Washington
N.Y. Giants at Indianapolis

Monday, Sept. 20
New Orleans at San Francisco

WEEK 3

Sunday, Sept. 26
Cleveland at Baltimore
Cincinnati at Carolina
Dallas at Houston
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at N.Y. Giants
Atlanta at New Orleans
Buffalo at New England
Detroit at Minnesota
San Francisco at Kansas City
Washington at St. Louis
Philadelphia at Jacksonville
San Diego at Seattle
Indianapolis at Denver
Oakland at Arizona
N.Y. Jets at Miami

Monday, Sept. 27
Green Bay at Chicago

WEEK 4

Sunday, Oct. 3
San Francisco at Atlanta
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Detroit at Green Bay
Carolina at New Orleans
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Denver at Tennessee
Seattle at St. Louis
Houston at Oakland
Indianapolis at Jacksonville
Arizona at San Diego
Washington at Philadelphia
Chicago at N.Y. Giants

Monday, Oct. 4
New England at Miami

Open Date: Dallas, Kansas City, Minnesota, Tampa Bay

WEEK 5

Sunday, Oct. 10
N.Y. Giants at Houston
Jacksonville at Buffalo
Chicago at Carolina
Atlanta at Cleveland
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati
Kansas City at Indianapolis
Denver at Baltimore
St. Louis at Detroit
Green Bay at Washington
New Orleans at Arizona
Tennessee at Dallas
San Diego at Oakland
Philadelphia at San Francisco

Monday, Oct. 11
Minnesota at N.Y. Jets

Open Date: Miami, Pittsburgh, Seattle, New England

WEEK 6

Sunday, Oct. 17
Seattle at Chicago
Miami at Green Bay
Kansas City at Houston
Cleveland at Pittsburgh
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
Detroit at N.Y. Giants
Atlanta at Philadelphia
San Diego at St. Louis
Baltimore at New England
Oakland at San Francisco
N.Y. Jets at Denver
Dallas at Minnesota
Indianapolis at Washington

Monday, Oct. 18
Tennessee at Jacksonville

Open Date: Arizona, Buffalo, Carolina, Cincinnati

WEEK 7

Sunday, Oct. 24
Cincinnati at Atlanta
Buffalo at Baltimore
San Francisco at Carolina
Washington at Chicago
Pittsburgh at Miami
Philadelphia at Tennessee
St. Louis at Tampa Bay
Cleveland at New Orleans
Jacksonville at Kansas City
Arizona at Seattle
New England at San Diego
Oakland at Denver
Minnesota at Green Bay

Monday, Oct. 25
N.Y. Giants at Dallas

Open Date: Detroit, Indianapolis, N.Y. Jets, Houston

WEEK 8

Sunday, Oct. 31
Washington at Detroit
Buffalo at Kansas City
Miami at Cincinnati
Carolina at St. Louis
Green Bay at N.Y. Jets
Denver at San Francisco
Jacksonville at Dallas
Tennessee at San Diego
Minnesota at New England
Tampa Bay at Arizona
Seattle at Oakland
Pittsburgh at New Orleans

Monday, Nov. 1
Houston at Indianapolis

Open Date: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, N.Y. Giants, Philadelphia, Cleveland

WEEK 9

Sunday, Nov. 7
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Miami at Baltimore
Chicago at Buffalo
New Orleans at Carolina
New England at Cleveland
San Diego at Houston
N.Y. Jets at Detroit
Arizona at Minnesota
N.Y. Giants at Seattle
Kansas City at Oakland
Indianapolis at Philadelphia
Dallas at Green Bay

Monday, Nov. 8
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati

Open Date: Denver, Jacksonville, St. Louis, San Francisco, Tennessee, Washington

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WEEK 10

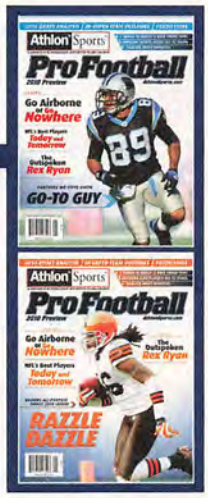
Thursday, Nov. 11
Baltimore at Atlanta
Sunday, Nov. 14
Minnesota at Chicago
N.Y. Jets at Cleveland
Carolina at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at Miami
Cincinnati at Indianapolis
Detroit at Buffalo
Houston at Jacksonville
Kansas City at Denver
St. Louis at San Francisco
Dallas at N.Y. Giants
Seattle at Arizona
New England at Pittsburgh
Monday, Nov. 15
Philadelphia at Washington
Open Date: Green Bay, New Orleans, Oakland, San Diego

WEEK 11

Thursday, Nov. 18
Chicago at Miami
Sunday, Nov. 21
Detroit at Dallas
Arizona at Kansas City
Green Bay at Minnesota
Baltimore at Carolina
Cleveland at Jacksonville
Oakland at Pittsburgh
Buffalo at Cincinnati
Washington at Tennessee
Houston at N.Y. Jets
Atlanta at St. Louis
Tampa Bay at San Francisco
Seattle at New Orleans
Indianapolis at New England
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia
Monday, Nov. 22
Denver at San Diego

WEEK 12

Thursday, Nov. 25
New England at Detroit
New Orleans at Dallas
Cincinnati at N.Y. Jets
Sunday, Nov. 28
Carolina at Cleveland
Jacksonville at N.Y. Giants
Philadelphia at Chicago
Pittsburgh at Buffalo
Green Bay at Atlanta
Tampa Bay at Baltimore
Tennessee at Houston
Minnesota at Washington
Kansas City at Seattle
Miami at Oakland
St. Louis at Denver
San Diego at Indianapolis
Monday, Nov. 29
San Francisco at Arizona



WEEK 13

Thursday, Dec. 2
Houston at Philadelphia
Sunday, Dec. 5
Chicago at Detroit
New Orleans at Cincinnati
Jacksonville at Tennessee
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Washington at N.Y. Giants
Buffalo at Minnesota
San Francisco at Green Bay
Denver at Kansas City
Cleveland at Miami
Oakland at San Diego
St. Louis at Arizona
Carolina at Seattle
Dallas at Indianapolis
Pittsburgh at Baltimore
Monday, Dec. 6
N.Y. Jets at New England

WEEK 14

Thursday, Dec. 9
Indianapolis at Tennessee
Sunday, Dec. 12
New England at Chicago
Green Bay at Detroit
Oakland at Jacksonville
Tampa Bay at Washington
Atlanta at Carolina
N.Y. Giants at Minnesota
Cleveland at Buffalo
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
Seattle at San Francisco
St. Louis at New Orleans
Kansas City at San Diego
Miami at N.Y. Jets
Denver at Arizona
Philadelphia at Dallas
Monday, Dec. 13
Baltimore at Houston

WEEK 15

Thursday, Dec. 16
San Francisco at San Diego
Sunday, Dec. 19
Washington at Dallas
Buffalo at Miami
New Orleans at Baltimore
Arizona at Carolina
Jacksonville at Indianapolis
Cleveland at Cincinnati
Houston at Tennessee
Detroit at Tampa Bay
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants
Kansas City at St. Louis
Atlanta at Seattle
Denver at Oakland
N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh
Green Bay at New England
Monday, Dec. 20
Chicago at Minnesota

WEEK 16

Thursday, Dec. 23
Carolina at Pittsburgh
Saturday, Dec. 25
Dallas at Arizona
Sunday, Dec. 26
Baltimore at Cleveland
N.Y. Jets at Chicago
New England at Buffalo
Minnesota at Philadelphia
Seattle at Tampa Bay
San Francisco at St. Louis
Detroit at Miami
Washington at Jacksonville
Tennessee at Kansas City
Indianapolis at Oakland
Houston at Denver
N.Y. Giants at Green Bay
San Diego at Cincinnati
Monday, Dec. 27
New Orleans at Atlanta

WEEK 17

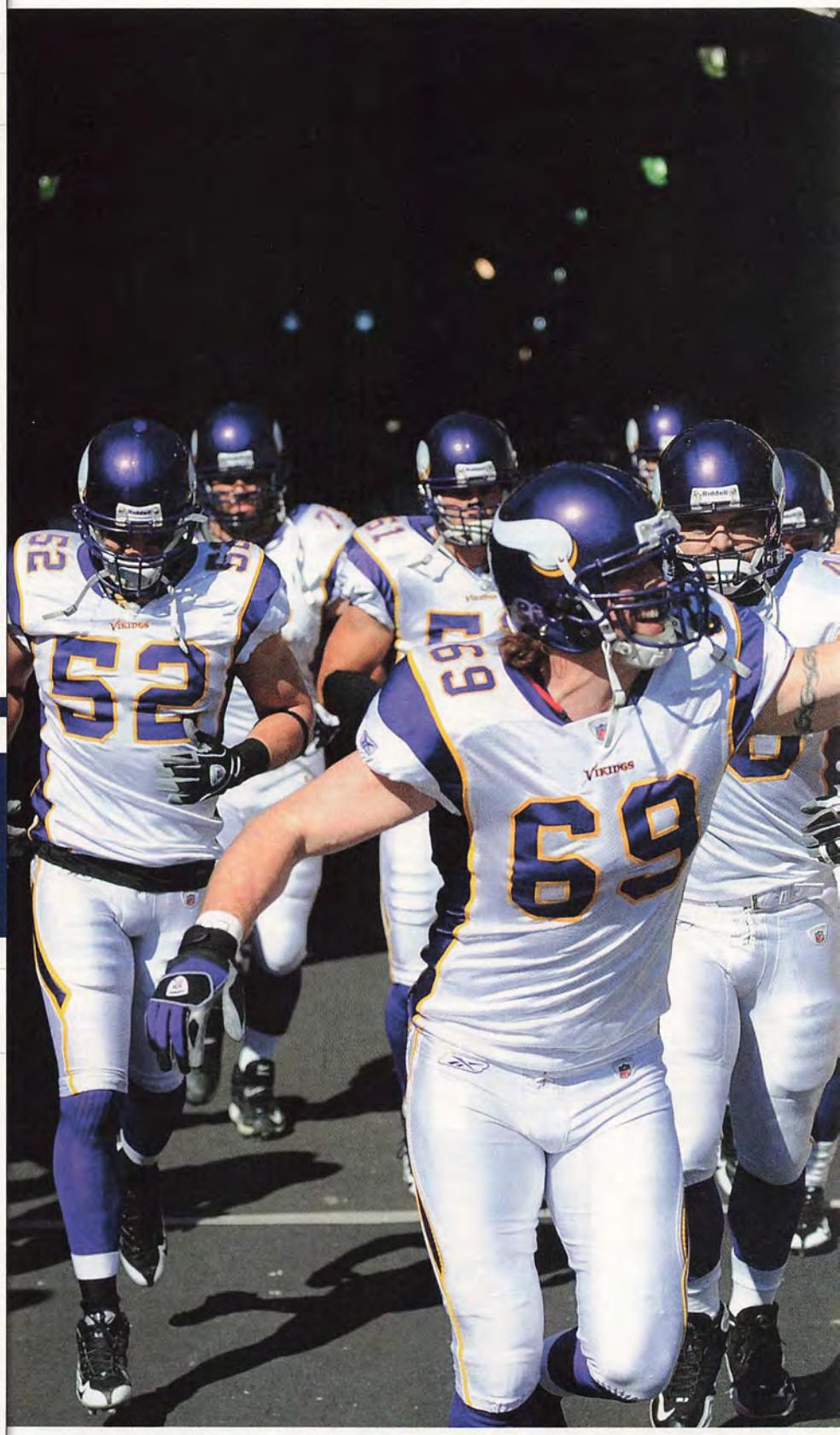
Sunday, Jan. 2
Carolina at Atlanta
Tennessee at Indianapolis
Pittsburgh at Cleveland
Minnesota at Detroit
Chicago at Green Bay
Oakland at Kansas City
Miami at New England
Tampa Bay at New Orleans
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets
Cincinnati at Baltimore
Dallas at Philadelphia
Jacksonville at Houston
N.Y. Giants at Washington
San Diego at Denver
Arizona at San Francisco
St. Louis at Seattle

POSTSEASON

Wild Card Weekend
Saturday, Jan. 8
AFC and NFC wild card playoffs (NBC)
Sunday, Jan. 9
AFC and NFC wild card playoffs (CBS and FOX)
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 15
AFC and NFC divisional playoffs (CBS and FOX)
Sunday, Jan. 16
AFC and NFC divisional playoffs (CBS and FOX)
Conference Championships
Sunday, Jan. 23
AFC and NFC championship games (CBS and FOX)
AFC-NFC Pro Bowl
Sunday, Jan. 30
AFC-NFC Pro Bowl in Honolulu, Hawaii (FOX)

Super Bowl XLV
Sunday, Feb. 6
Super Bowl XLV in Arlington, Texas (FOX)

2010 NFC



NFC PLAYOFFS

SEEDING

1. Vikings
2. Saints
3. Cowboys
4. 49ers
5. Packers
6. Falcons

WILD CARD ROUND

Cowboys over Falcons
Packers over 49ers

DIVISIONAL ROUND

Vikings over Packers
Cowboys over Saints

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP

Vikings over Cowboys

SUPER BOWL XLV

Ravens over Vikings
Sunday, Feb. 6, 2011
Cowboys Stadium, Arlington, Texas (FOX)

ATHLON SPORTS' NFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Vikings
2. Saints
3. Cowboys
4. Packers
5. 49ers
6. Falcons
7. Giants
8. Redskins
9. Eagles
10. Seahawks
11. Bears
12. Cardinals
13. Panthers
14. Lions
15. Buccaneers
16. Rams

NOTE: Athlon's Power Rankings and playoff seedings differ to some degree because a team's overall strength and its ultimate finish in the standings don't always correlate.

PREDICTIONS

Rob Tringali/Getty Images

NFC EAST

1. DALLAS COWBOYS

Cowboys' goal: Home game in the Super Bowl.

2. NEW YORK GIANTS

Defensive ineptitude was a one-year aberration.

3. WASHINGTON REDSKINS

Wholesale changes, measurable improvement.

4. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Home fans can boo McNabb only once this year.

NFC NORTH

1. MINNESOTA VIKINGS

If only all 40-somethings were in such demand.

2. GREEN BAY PACKERS

Rodgers is much better when he's not on his back.

3. CHICAGO BEARS

Martz is to Cutler as Mr. Miyagi is to Daniel-san.

4. DETROIT LIONS

From zero wins to two wins to, holy smokes, four? *Five?*

NFC SOUTH

1. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Saints hope to stage mother of all repeat celebrations.

2. ATLANTA FALCONS

Falcons want to see more 2008 Turner classic game film.

3. CAROLINA PANTHERS

Camp battle to determine who throws this year's picks.

4. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

Used to be only NFC South team with a Super Bowl win.

NFC WEST

1. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

No need to drop trou when 49ers are winning.

2. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Pete turns pro: Rah-Rah, Seahawks!

3. ARIZONA CARDINALS

Sobering thought: It all comes down to Leinart.

4. ST. LOUIS RAMS

Time for Bradford to see how the other half lives.

NFC NOTES

by Mike Nahrstedt

PRESEASON ALL-NFC TEAM

OFFENSE

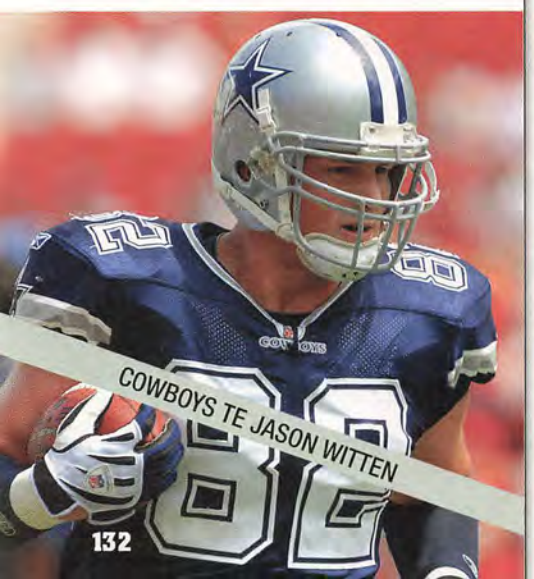
QB	Aaron Rodgers, Packers
RB	Frank Gore, 49ers
RB	Adrian Peterson, Vikings
WR	Larry Fitzgerald, Cardinals
WR	Calvin Johnson, Lions
TE	Jason Witten, Cowboys
T	Jason Peters, Eagles
T	Bryant McKinnie, Vikings
G	Jahri Evans, Saints
G	Steve Hutchinson, Vikings
C	Andre Gurode, Cowboys

DEFENSE

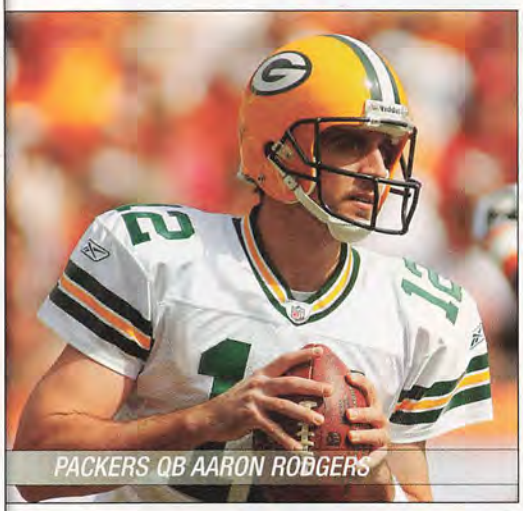
E	Jared Allen, Vikings
E	Julius Peppers, Bears
T	Aubrayo Franklin, 49ers
T	Kevin Williams, Vikings
LB	Brian Orakpo, Redskins
LB	DeMarcus Ware, Cowboys
LB	Patrick Willis, 49ers
CB	Mike Jenkins, Cowboys
CB	Asante Samuel, Eagles
S	Nick Collins, Packers
S	Antrel Rolle, Giants

SPECIALISTS

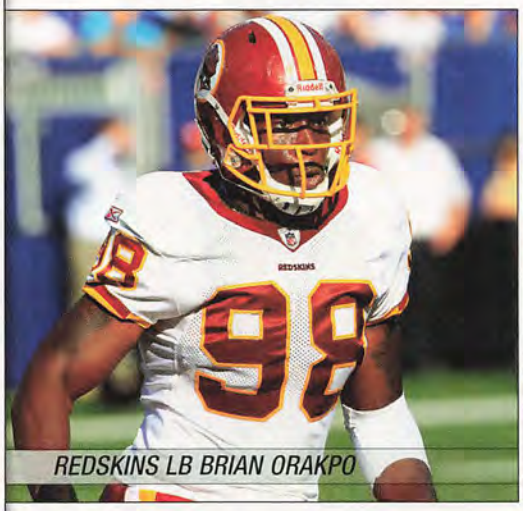
K	David Akers, Eagles
P	Ben Graham, Cardinals



COWBOYS TE JASON WITTEN



PACKERS QB AARON RODGERS



REDSKINS LB BRIAN ORAKPO

NFC AWARD WINNERS

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Aaron Rodgers, QB, Packers

Rodgers rises above Brees, Romo and, of course, Favre.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Brian Orakpo, LB, Redskins

Like Elvis Dumervil last year, Orakpo will love playing the edge in a 3-4.

COMEBACK PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Jay Cutler, QB, Bears

Many players come back from serious injury. Cutler? From serious embarrassment.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Ndamukong Suh, DT, Lions

A monster who eats up blockers and destroys quarterbacks.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Mike Shanahan, Redskins

As much for making club functional as for improving won-lost record.

STATISTICAL MOVERS

The biggest movement in the NFL team rankings from the 2008 season to 2009:

TOTAL OFFENSE, BIGGEST RISE: Vikings, from 17th (330.9 yards per game) to fifth (379.6). Love him or hate him, Brett Favre has an indisputable impact.

TOTAL OFFENSE, BIGGEST FALL: Bucs, from 14th (341.0) to 28th (287.5). There was more to it than just rookie Josh Freeman's growing pains.

TOTAL DEFENSE, BIGGEST RISE: Packers, from 20th (334.3) to second (284.4). Nowhere did the switch from a 4-3 to a 3-4 scheme pay more immediate dividends.

TOTAL DEFENSE, BIGGEST FALL: Bucs, from ninth (306.1) to 27th (365.6). It would have been worse had coach Raheem Morris not handled the defense himself the last six games.

NOTABLE NON-MOVEMENT: The Lions improved from 0–16 to 2–14, but they still ranked last in the league in total defense both years. Last three, in fact.

ABOUT THE SCHEDULE

TOUGHEST SCHEDULE: Cowboys. A schedule that builds in intensity is brutal from Thanksgiving on.

EASIEST SCHEDULE: Cardinals. If they're not playing the Rams or Seahawks, it's the Chiefs, Raiders or Bucs. Matt Leinart can thank his lucky stars.

MOST PRIME-TIME GAMES: Cowboys (six). That's one more than the Super Bowl champion Saints, whom they host in a great Thanksgiving matchup.

MOST TRAVEL MILES: 49ers (33,264). West Coast teams always get slammed, but throwing in a trip to London is cruel.

FEWEST TRAVEL MILES: Redskins (8,932). Mike Shanahan will spend less time on planes than he did in Denver.

Rodgers: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports; Orakpo: Athlon Sports; Witten: Mark Langello
Smith: Peter Brouillet; Peppers: Bruce Schwartzman; Fan: Hunter Martin/Getty Images

BEARS COACH LOVIE SMITH

COACHING TIDBITS

ON THE HOT SEAT: Lovie Smith, Bears. After the Bears made heavy investments in personnel the last two years, a fourth straight non-playoff season following Super Bowl XLI won't cut it.

EASIEST DEBUT: Mike Shanahan, Redskins. The man has won two Super Bowls as a head coach, and he replaces one of the most miscast head coaches in NFL history.

KEY COORDINATOR HIRE: Mike Martz (offense), Bears. Martz developed Kurt Warner from grocery store clerk to superstar and made Jon Kitna look good. Fixing Jay Cutler's woes should be a breeze.

COACH WE EXPECT TO ENJOY MOST: Pete Carroll, Seahawks. Does this guy ever have a down day?

RANKING THE MIKES: 1. Mike Shanahan, Redskins; 2. Mike McCarthy, Packers; 3. Mike Smith, Falcons; 4. Mike Singletary, 49ers. (Sorry, Mike Tomlin, you're in the AFC.)

FREE AGENCY RECAP

BEST SIGNING: Julius Peppers, DE, Bears. A defense in need of a playmaker got the best one on the market.

BEST RE-SIGNINGS: Chad Clifton, OT, and Mark Tauscher, OT, Packers. The Packers' line wasn't that bad when Clifton and Tauscher were in the lineup and reasonably healthy.

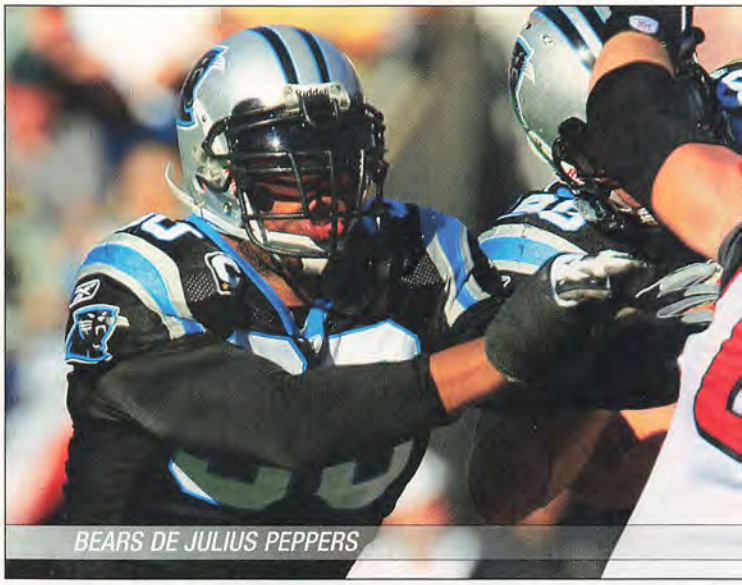
MOST QUESTIONABLE SIGNING: Larry Johnson, RB, Redskins. It's more likely he'll become a clubhouse cancer than an offensive catalyst.

MOVING UP IN THE WORLD: Jimmy Wilkerson, DE, Saints (from Bucs).

SLIPPING INTO THE LOW-RENT DISTRICT: Sean Jones, S, Bucs (from Eagles).

BEST FREE AGENT HAUL: Bears. Beyond Peppers, running back Chester Taylor is a great complement to Matt Forté, and Brandon Manumaleuna is the type of tight end Mike Martz wants in his offense.

BEST HAUL INCLUDING TRADES: Lions. Free agency netted two starters in wide receiver Nate Burleson and defensive end Kyle Vanden Bosch. Trades brought three or four more in cornerback Chris Houston, defensive tackle Corey Williams, guard Rob Sims and tight end Tony Scheffler.


BEARS DE JULIUS PEPPERS

WINNINGEST TEAMS OF THE DECADE

You'd think the quarterback of the NFC team that won more games than any other in the years 2000-09 would be respected and beloved, but the Eagles reached the Super Bowl only once and lost that game. And so as a new decade dawns, Eagles fans bid farewell to Donovan McNabb, shedding fewer tears than he clearly merits. At the other end of the spectrum is Detroit, which opened the decade with a winning record (9–7) and just went down — way down — from there. The Lions were the only NFC team that failed to post a single season with double-digit wins.

Team	Wins
1. Eagles	103
2. Packers	95
3. Giants	88
4. Vikings	84
5. Saints	83
6. Cowboys	82
Seahawks	82
8. Bears	81
9. Panthers	79
Bucs	79
11. Falcons	75
12. Rams	71
13. Redskins	70
14. 49ers	68
15. Cardinals	62
16. Lions	42

QUARTERBACKS WON-LOST RECORDS

The 16 frontrunners for the starting job on each team, ranked by winning percentage in games started.

1.	Matt Moore, Panthers	6–2 (.750)
2.	Tony Romo, Cowboys	38–17 (.691)
3.	Matt Ryan, Falcons	20–10 (.667)
4.	Donovan McNabb, Redskins	92–49–1 (.651)
5.	Brett Favre, Vikings	181–104 (.635)
6.	Eli Manning, Giants	50–37 (.575)
7.	Drew Brees, Saints	68–53 (.562)
8.	Matt Hasselbeck, Seahawks	63–54 (.538)
9.	Aaron Rodgers, Packers	17–15 (.531)
10.	Kevin Kolb, Eagles	1–1 (.500)
11.	Jay Cutler, Bears	24–29 (.453)
12.	Matt Leinart, Cardinals	7–10 (.412)
13.	Alex Smith, 49ers	16–24 (.400)
14.	Josh Freeman, Bucs	3–6 (.333)
15.	Matthew Stafford, Lions	2–8 (.200)
16.	Sam Bradford, Rams	0–0 (.000)

dallas COWBOYS

1 NFC EAST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER/PRESIDENT/GM: Jerry Jones
EXECUTIVE VP PLAYER PERSONNEL: Stephen Jones
STADIUM: Dallas Cowboys Stadium (80,000)
SURFACE: Turf
WEBSITE: www.dallascowboys.com
TICKETS: 817-892-5000
TRAINING CAMP: River Ridge Complex (Oxnard, Calif.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	9	
2006	9	PLAYOFFS
2007	13	PLAYOFFS
2008	9	
2009	11	PLAYOFFS

PLAYOFFS Playoffs

COWBOYS LB DEMARCUS WARE

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones has three Super Bowl rings, so naturally, seeing his team win a playoff game for the first time in 13 seasons didn't bring him any satisfaction. It only makes him hungrier for a fourth ring. "The playoff win really does have credible impact on the guys that we're counting on to win some more playoff games," Jones says. "Beyond that, I don't think it means anything."

The Cowboys are among the 2010 Super Bowl favorites in Las Vegas, but at Valley Ranch, they're starting over. Wade Phillips already has pointed out to his players that eight of the past 12 Super Bowls have featured a team making its Super Bowl debut. In other words, the preseason favorites aren't usually the conference champions.

But they do have a familiar look with 20 of 22 starters returning along with Phillips, whose job was in jeopardy until the Cowboys beat the Eagles in the wild card round.

COACHES Heading into his fourth season, Phillips finally appears comfortable as coach of the Cowboys. He no longer is in Bill Parcells' shadow or looking over his shoulder at Mike Holmgren and Mike Shanahan. Phillips has a new contract and a team that now, without a doubt, is his. Phillips is 34–17 (including playoffs) in his three seasons in Dallas, the highest winning percentage in team history — ahead of Jimmy Johnson, Tom Landry, Barry Switzer and Parcells. Phillips did double duty last season, serving as defensive coordinator, and his 3-4 scheme flourished. Offensive coordinator Jason Garrett might have had his best season as a play-caller, though for the first time in three seasons his name did not come up in connection to any of the head coach jobs around the league. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS Tony Romo became a better quarterback last season, learning when to take chances and when to play it safe. He reduced his turnovers from 21 in 13 games in 2008 to 13 in 16 games last season. He had a career-high 4,483 passing yards and threw 26 touchdowns. And in leading the Cowboys to a winning record in December and January, Romo proved he could win a big game. But Romo is 30 and under pressure to lead the Cowboys to the Super Bowl before their window closes. Even though Jon Kitna never had to play, the Cowboys are comfortable with him as their backup. He has two 4,000-yard passing seasons in his career and 27,293 career passing yards. The Cowboys drafted Texas A&M's Stephen McGee in the fourth round last year. McGee struggled in the preseason during his rookie campaign, but for now, the Cowboys are being patient with him as their developmental quarterback. ***GRADE: B+***

RUNNING BACKS Jones conceded after the season that the Cowboys came close to making Felix Jones their starter last season. Though he didn't start, he became a bigger part of the team's offense in the final six games, including the two playoff games. If Jones can stay healthy, he might see the ball earlier rather than later this season. Jones rushed for 475 yards and two touchdowns on 79 carries in the final six games. He caught 13 passes for 94 yards. That's 92 touches for 569 yards. Marion Barber had 73 rushes for 281 yards and eight catches for 77 yards in that stretch, a total of 81 touches for 358 yards. Both Jones and Barber have missed time with injuries the past two seasons, and Barber's ailments are beginning to concern the Cowboys. His bruising running style has exposed him to some nasty hits, and his body seems to be worse for wear. Turning 27 before the season begins, Barber might be on his last legs. Tashard Choice has become a quality third down back, and the Cowboys intend to continue with their single-wing offense, the Razorback, to get Choice as many touches as possible. Choice is a team player, but he has made it known he would like to be a bigger part of the offense. Deon Anderson might face competition at fullback. ***GRADE: B+***

RECEIVERS Miles Austin emerged as one of the league's elite receivers with 81 catches for 1,320 yards and 11 touchdowns last season. The Cowboys were as happy with Austin's success as they were disappointed in the play of Roy Williams. Garrett and Romo have never gotten on the same page with Williams, an overpaid third option behind Austin and tight end Jason Witten last year. The Cowboys have too much invested in Williams (money and draft picks) to sever ties with him, but they did send a message with the selection of Oklahoma State's Dez Bryant, an enormously talented receiver, in the first round of the draft. The Cowboys also are high on Kevin Ogletree, an undrafted free agent find last year. Witten, 28, already ranks as one of the best tight ends ever to play for the Cowboys and is coming off his second 1,000-yard season (1,030 yards on 94 catches). The Cowboys would like to get him more involved in the red zone than he was last season, when he had only two touchdowns. Dallas has used picks on players to back up Witten in each of the past two drafts. The Cowboys had great expectations for Martellus Bennett, a second-round choice in 2008, with plans to use him extensively in two-tight end sets. But Bennett had

Ware, Romo: Mark Langello

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Get to Know Dez Receivers coach Ray Sherman thinks the team's newest receiver, Dez Bryant, will be a nice addition not only on the field, but off the field as well. "Time is going to tell the type of player he's going to be," Sherman says. "But he's a good person, and that's what you've got to understand. Believe me, we did our homework on this guy, and the people I talked to were very high on him. They said he's a class guy, a great worker. He's a guy that doesn't get in trouble. I just hope people give him a fair chance." Bryant was red-flagged by some teams for "character concerns," though he has never been in trouble with the law. His only offense was lying to NCAA investigators about his association with Deion Sanders, which resulted in the NCAA declaring him ineligible last September.

1K Drought Since Emmitt Smith ran for 1,021 yards in 2001, the Cowboys have had only one 1,000-yard rusher. Julius Jones rushed for 1,084 yards in 2006.

Finally, Late-Season Success In 2009, the Cowboys produced their first winning record in December and January (4–3) and their first postseason victory since 1996.

2009 STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	399.4	2	2
Rushing	131.4	7	3
Passing	267.9	6	2
Scoring	22.6	14	8
Punt Returns	10.9	T6	T3
Kick Returns	22.0	20	9
Red Zone TD %	52.0	14	7

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	315.9	9	4
Rushing	90.5	4	3
Passing	225.4	20	9
Scoring	15.6	2	1
Interceptions	11	T26	T12
Sacks	42	7	5
Turnover Differential	+2	T13	8

SCOUTING THE COWBOYS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP DALLAS

"I think you can't overstate how huge (Dez Bryant) could pay off. The question everyone seemed to be asking was, how much of a risk is it to take him? They should've been asking, how much of a risk would it be to pass on him? He has rare talent. … I just think Bryant is skilled, strong physically. What you want from a receiver coming straight from college is someone who can run the entire route tree. He can do that. He can go vertical, muscle up on a slant, anything. And he does so much naturally. … They might have been the best team in the NFC at the end of last year, but they just couldn't protect Tony Romo in Minnesota. That was it. Flozell Adams got hurt, the line fell apart and the Cowboys couldn't do a thing. If they protect him, that team has all the ingredients for a run. … The Boys have got the personnel. But frankly, they didn't do enough with it last year. If their goal was winning a wild card playoff game, then they accomplished their goal."

COWBOYS QB TONY ROMO

a disappointing season. He didn't play as well as John Phillips, a sixth-round pick last season, and the Cowboys have put Bennett on notice for 2010. ***GRADE: A-***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Because of penalties and fines, left tackle Flozell Adams never was appreciated fully by anyone outside the organization for the job he did protecting Dallas quarterbacks' blind sides for 12 seasons. The Cowboys might discover just how much they miss Adams this season after releasing him in an offseason cost-cutting move. Adams' future with the team was sealed when right tackle Marc Colombo was injured in Week 10, forcing unproven Doug Free into the lineup. Free started the final seven games of the regular season, giving up only one sack with four penalties. Although the Cowboys are convinced Free can play left tackle, he struggled there in the playoff game against Minnesota. Free played 40 of 67 plays in place of Adams, who was injured in the first half, and Vikings end Ray Edwards embarrassed him. Right guard Leonard Davis played left tackle with the Cardinals, so he is a fallback option if Free doesn't work out, but Davis is a better fit at guard. Although Davis and center Andre Gurode made the Pro Bowl, left guard Kyle Kosier graded out the best among the Cowboys' linemen last season. Colombo turns 32 in October, so the Cowboys need to start planning for the future without him. ***GRADE: B-***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Jay Ratliff, a former seventh-round pick, has become one of the top nosetackles in the league — a nice distinction to have as the focal point of a 3-4 defense. In 2009, Ratliff had six sacks and earned All-Pro honors for the first time. His backup, Junior Siavii, played better than the Cowboys expected, considering he had not played a game since 2005. Marcus Spears had his best season ever in 2009, but Jason Hatcher and Stephen Bowen will get a chance to beat out Spears for a starting job at end. The Cowboys feel good about their decision to let Chris Canty leave for big money a year ago. While Canty was injured most of last season with the Giants, the Cowboys got their money's worth out of end Igor Olshansky, who was solid in his first season in Dallas. ***GRADE: B-***

LINEBACKERS This is the strength of the Cowboys, who arguably have the best group of linebackers in the league. DeMarcus Ware fought through head, neck, back, foot and wrist injuries last season and still had 11 sacks after getting a league-leading 20 in 2008. He is one of the league's most feared pass-rushers. Anthony Spencer lived up to the expectations the Cowboys had for him when they made him the 26th overall pick in 2007, making Cowboys fans forget Greg Ellis. In the last eight games (including the playoffs), Spencer had eight sacks, 22 quarterback pressures and two forced fumbles and arguably was the team's best defensive player. Inside linebacker Bradie James has led the team in tackles for five consecutive seasons. He was helped last season by the arrival of outside linebacker Keith Brooking, who not only was a solid tackler, but also a team leader. The Cowboys still have high hopes for several linebackers they drafted last season, including Jason Williams, Victor Butler and Brandon Williams. But Dallas used a second-round choice on Penn State's Sean Lee, so someone will be the odd-man out. ***GRADE: A+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Jones admits he has some reservations about his free safeties after cutting Ken Hamlin. Converted cornerback Alan Ball and second-year pro Mike Hamlin will compete for the job. But the Cowboys are comfortable with the rest of the secondary. Strong safety Gerald Sensabaugh was signed from Jacksonville before last year and played well despite suffering a broken thumb early in the season that prevented him from getting more than one interception. And both cornerbacks, Terence Newman and Mike Jenkins, made the Pro Bowl last season. Jenkins, entering his third season, looks to be emerging as one of the league's top cover men. Orlando Scandrick is a solid nickelback, but Dallas lacks further depth. ***GRADE: C***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Alex Barron	OT	St. Louis	Flozell Adams	OT	Free agent
Connor Hughes	K	AFL	Bobby Carpenter	LB	St. Louis
			Ken Hamlin	S	Free agent
			Shaun Suisham	K	Free agent

In anticipation of the uncapped year, the Cowboys tied up their core players to long-term deals in recent seasons. That's why, with so much money invested in their own players, the Cowboys weren't active in free agency. The lack of a salary cap also is why they released Hamlin and Adams. (In an uncapped year, teams have been able to shed salaries without taking the normal cap hit.) They traded Carpenter for Barron to add depth on the offensive line.

SPECIALISTS Before last season, the Cowboys hired Joe DeCamillis to revamp their special teams. They also drafted David Buehler as a kickoff specialist. Buehler led the league in touchbacks with 29 after the Cowboys had none in 2008. Dallas struggled in the kicking game when Nick Folk suddenly lost his touch. Folk was released after missing 10-of-28 field-goal attempts, and Shaun Suisham wasn't much better. The Cowboys are starting over with former AFL kicker Connor Hughes and Buehler competing for the job. Veteran punter Mat McBriar remains at the top of his game, and Bryant should greatly improve the return game. Felix Jones and Patrick Crayton could well return to their roles on kickoff and punt returns, respectively, but Bryant has the skills to become the team's best return man since, ironically, Deion Sanders. ***GRADE: C***

FINAL ANALYSIS The Cowboys would love nothing more than to become the first team in NFL history to play the Super Bowl in their home stadium. They have all the pieces to do just that if they can stay healthy and overcome another arduous late-season schedule.

DALLAS IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Dez Bryant	WR	6-2	225	Oklahoma State
2. Sean Lee	LB	6-2	236	Penn State
4. Akwasi Owusu-Ansah	S	6-0	207	Indiana (Pa.)
6. Sam Young	OT	6-8	316	Notre Dame
6. Jamar Wall	CB	5-10	204	Texas Tech
7. Sean Lissemore	DT	6-4	298	William & Mary

Bryant and Lee, both of whom the Cowboys traded up to select, have a chance to play a lot this season. Bryant will upgrade Dallas' return game and steadily ease into the lineup at receiver. Lee, another in a long line of top-flight linebackers from Penn State, is expected to contribute primarily on third down. Owusu-Ansah and Lissemore were sleepers who could eventually become contributors. Owusu-Ansah will be tried at free safety, where the Cowboys are in search of a starter, and Lissemore will compete with Junior Siavii to be Jay Ratliff's backup. Young's size gives him a chance to at least spend a season on the practice squad, if not the active roster.

Chris Covatta

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Kitna, Jon	QB	6-2	230	13	Central Washington	T-Det-09	FA-Sea-97
7 McGee, Stephen	QB	6-3	218	1	Texas A&M	D4a-09	D4a-Dal-09
9 Romo, Tony	QB	6-2	226	7	Eastern Illinois	FA-03	FA-Dal-03
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
34 Anderson, Deon	FB	5-10	246	3	Connecticut	D6b-07	D6b-Dal-07
24 Barber, Marion	RB	6-0	222	5	Minnesota	D4a-05	D4a-Dal-05
23 Choice, Tashard	RB	5-10	212	2	Georgia Tech	D4-08	D4-Dal-08
31 Donaldson, Herb	RB	5-11	225	1	Western Illinois	FA-09	FA-NO-09
28 Jones, Felix	RB	5-10	218	2	Arkansas	D1a-08	D1a-Dal-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
19 Austin, Miles	WR	6-3	214	4	Monmouth	FA-06	FA-Dal-06
80 Bennett, Martellus	TE	6-6	266	2	Texas A&M	D2-08	D2-Dal-08
84 Crayton, Patrick	WR	6-0	204	6	NW Oklahoma St.	D7b-04	D7b-Dal-04
16 Holley, Jesse	WR	6-2	213	1	North Carolina	FA-09	FA-Cin-07
17 Hurd, Sam	WR	6-2	208	4	Northern Illinois	FA-06	FA-Dal-06
15 Johnson, Manuel	WR	5-11	195	1	Oklahoma	D7b-09	D7b-Dal-09
85 Ogletree, Kevin	WR	6-0	192	1	Virginia	FA-09	FA-Dal-09
89 Phillips, John	TE	6-5	255	1	Virginia	D6b-09	D6b-Dal-09
11 Williams, Roy	WR	6-3	215	6	Texas	T-Det-08	D1-Det-04
82 Witten, Jason	TE	6-5	263	7	Tennessee	D3-03	D3-Dal-03
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
Barron, Alex	T	6-7	302	5	Florida State	D1-05	D1-StL-05
79 Brewster, Robert	T	6-4	320	1	Ball State	D3b-09	D3b-Dal-09
60 Bright, Travis	G	6-4	320	1	BYU	FA-09	FA-Dal-09
75 Colombo, Marc	T	6-8	318	8	Boston College	FA-05	D1-Chi-02
70 Davis, Leonard	G	6-6	353	9	Texas	FA-Ari-07	D1-Ari-01
68 Free, Doug	T	6-6	313	3	Northern Illinois	D4b-07	D4b-Dal-07
65 Gurode, Andre	C	6-4	318	8	Colorado	D2a-02	D2a-Dal-02
64 Holland, Montrae	G	6-2	326	7	Florida State	T-Den-08	D4-NO-03
63 Kosier, Kyle	G	6-5	307	8	Arizona State	FA-Det-06	D7-SF-02
77 McQuistan, Pat	T	6-6	317	4	Weber State	D7a-06	D7a-Dal-06
69 Preston, Duke	C	6-5	311	5	Illinois	FA-09	D4-Buf-05
71 Procter, Cory	C	6-4	311	5	Montana	FA-05	FA-Det-05
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
72 Bowen, Stephen	DE	6-5	306	4	Hofstra	FA-06	FA-Dal-06
92 Dixon, Marcus	DE	6-4	285	1	Hampton	FA-08	FA-Dal-08
97 Hatcher, Jason	DE	6-6	305	4	Grambling State	D3b-06	D3b-Dal-06
99 Olshansky, Igor	DE	6-6	315	6	Oregon	FA-SD-09	D2-SD-04
90 Ratliff, Jay	NT	6-4	303	5	Auburn	D7-05	D7-Dal-05
95 Siavii, Junior	NT	6-5	318	4	Oregon	FA-09	D2-KC-04
96 Spears, Marcus	DE	6-4	309	5	LSU	D1b-05	D1b-Dal-05
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
51 Brooking, Keith	LB	6-2	242	12	Georgia Tech	FA-Atl-09	D1-Atl-98
57 Butler, Victor	LB	6-2	246	1	Oregon State	D4b-09	D4b-Dal-09
55 Hodge, Stephen	LB	6-0	238	1	TCU	D6a-09	D6a-Dal-09
56 James, Bradie	LB	6-2	247	7	LSU	D4-03	D4-Dal-03
53 Octavien, Steve	LB	6-0	246	1	Nebraska	FA-08	FA-KC-08
93 Spencer, Anthony	LB	6-3	256	3	Purdue	D1-07	D1-Dal-07
94 Ware, DeMarcus	LB	6-4	262	5	Troy	D1a-05	D1a-Dal-05
59 Williams, Brandon	LB	6-3	248	1	Texas Tech	D4c-09	D4c-Dal-09
58 Williams, Jason	LB	6-1	246	1	Western Illinois	D3a-09	D3a-Dal-09
50 Woods, Donovan	LB	6-2	230	2	Oklahoma State	FA-09	FA-Pit-08
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
20 Ball, Alan	S	6-1	188	3	Illinois	D7b-07	D7b-Dal-07
29 Floyd, Marquis	CB	6-0	190	2	West Georgia	FA-09	FA-Sea-08
27 Gordon, Cletis	CB	6-1	205	4	Jackson State	FA-09	FA-SD-06
36 Hamlin, Michael	S	6-2	213	1	Clemson	D5b-09	D5b-Dal-09
21 Jenkins, Mike	CB	5-10	198	2	South Florida	D1b-08	D1b-Dal-08
41 Newman, Terence	CB	5-11	191	7	Kansas State	D1-03	D1-Dal-03
32 Scandrick, Orlando	CB	5-10	193	2	Boise State	D5-08	D5-Dal-08
43 Sensabaugh, Gerald	S	6-0	210	5	North Carolina	FA-Jac-09	D5-Jac-05
25 Watkins, Patrick	S	6-5	218	4	Florida State	D5-06	D5-Dal-06
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
18 Buehler, David	K	6-2	228	1	USC	D5c-09	D5c-Dal-09
Hughes, Connor	K	5-10	172	0	Virginia	FA-10	FA-NO-06
91 Ladouceur, Louis-Philippe	LS	6-4	256	5	California	FA-05	FA-NO-05
1 McBriar, Mat	P	6-1	220	6	Hawaii	FA-04	FA-Den-03

Mark Langello

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	11	Roy Williams
	88	Dez Bryant (R)
WR	19	Miles Austin
	85	Kevin Ogletree
LT	68	Doug Free
		Alex Barron
LG	63	Kyle Kosier
	64	Montrae Holland
C	65	Andre Gurode
	71	Cory Procter
RG	70	Leonard Davis
	64	Montrae Holland
RT	75	Marc Colombo
	77	Pat McQuistan
TE	82	Jason Witten
	80	Martellus Bennett
QB	9	Tony Romo
	3	Jon Kitna
FB	34	Deon Anderson
RB	28	Felix Jones
	24	Marion Barber

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	99	Igor Olshansky
	72	Stephen Bowen
NT	90	Jay Ratliff
	95	Junior Siavii
DE	96	Marcus Spears
	97	Jason Hatcher
WLB	94	DeMarcus Ware
	59	Brandon Williams
ILB	56	Bradie James
	45	Sean Lee (R)
ILB	51	Keith Brooking
	58	Jason Williams
SLB	93	Anthony Spencer
	57	Victor Butler
CB	41	Terence Newman
	32	Orlando Scandrick
CB	21	Mike Jenkins
	32	Orlando Scandrick
SS	43	Gerald Sensabaugh
	25	Patrick Watkins
FS	20	Alan Ball
	36	Michael Hamlin

SPECIALISTS

K	18	David Buehler
KR	28	Felix Jones
P	1	Mat McBriar
PR	88	Dez Bryant (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Wade Phillips
Asst. Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator: Jason Garrett
Special Teams: Joe DeCamillis
Quarterbacks: Wade Wilson
Running Backs: Skip Peete
Wide Receivers: Ray Sherman
Tight Ends: John Garrett
Offensive Line: Hudson Houck
Offensive Quality Control: Wesley Phillips
Defensive Line: Paul Pasqualoni
Linebackers: Reggie Herring
Secondary: Dave Campo
Asst. Secondary: Brett Maxie
Defensive Quality Control: Bobby King
Strength and Conditioning: Joe Juraszek

FANTASY FLASH

After catching only five balls in the first four games of the season, **Miles Austin** caught four or more passes in all but one of his final 12 contests, including two 10-catch games. He had six or more receptions in each of the final five regular-season games of '09. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(11–5)*

Sept. 13	at Tampa Bay	W	34–21
Sept. 20	N.Y. Giants	L	31–33
Sept. 28	Carolina	W	21– 7
Oct. 4	at Denver	L	10–17
Oct. 11	at Kansas City (ot)	W	26–20
Oct. 25	Atlanta	W	37–21
Nov. 1	Seattle	W	38–17
Nov. 8	at Philadelphia	W	20–16
Nov. 15	at Green Bay	L	7–17
Nov. 22	Washington	W	7– 6
Nov. 26	Oakland	W	24– 7
Dec. 6	at N.Y. Giants	L	24–31
Dec. 13	San Diego	L	17–20
Dec. 19	at New Orleans	W	24–17
Dec. 27	at Washington	W	17– 0
Jan. 3	Philadelphia	W	24– 0
Postseason			
Jan. 9	Philadelphia	W	34–14
Jan. 17	at Minnesota	L	3–34

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Washington	8:20 pm
Sept. 19	Chicago	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Houston	1:00 pm
Week 4	BYE	
Oct. 10	Tennessee	4:15 pm
Oct. 17	at Minnesota	4:15 pm
Oct. 25	N.Y. Giants (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 31	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	at Green Bay	8:20 pm
Nov. 14	at N.Y. Giants	4:15 pm
Nov. 21	Detroit	1:00 pm
Nov. 25	New Orleans (Thu.)	4:15 pm
Dec. 5	at Indianapolis	4:15 pm
Dec. 12	Philadelphia	8:20 pm
Dec. 19	Washington	1:00 pm
Dec. 25	at Arizona (Sat.)	7:30 pm
Jan. 2	at Philadelphia	1:00 pm

new york GIANTS

2 NFC EAST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
PRESIDENT/CEO: John K. Mara
GENERAL MANAGER: Jerry Reese
STADIUM: Meadowlands Stadium (82,500)
SURFACE: FieldTurf
WEBSITE: www.giants.com
TICKETS: 201-935-8222
TRAINING CAMP: University of Albany (Albany, N.Y.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	11	PLAYOFFS
2006	8	
2007	10	PLAYOFFS
2008	12	
2009	8	

Super Bowl Champion PLAYOFFS Playoffs

GIANTS WR STEVE SMITH

The 2009 season was a disaster for the Giants. At least that's how it felt to everyone involved. There was a misery not usually associated with a .500 football team. "There are 8–8 seasons, and there are 8–8 seasons," co-owner John Mara says. "This one felt a lot more like 2–14 to me." As ugly as it all was — especially after a 5–0 start — cooler heads eventually prevailed, and the Giants realized their organizational cupboard wasn't bare. They still have the talent to contend in the NFC East. They just didn't have most of that talent available last year.

The truth is, they were devastated by injuries. Almost every defensive starter was hit. So were their running backs, two-fifths of their offensive line and even their quarterback. That, more than anything else, is what caused their disaster of a season. And that's why they are convinced that, when healthy, they have as deep and talented a roster as any team in the NFC — as good as the one they had when they won Super Bowl XLII.

All they need, they believe, is a little luck and a return to good health. After what they endured last year, they believe they're due.

COACHES Tom Coughlin might be back on the hot seat for the first time since 2007, right before he led the Giants to the Super Bowl XLII championship. His team has faith in him, but he must recapture the reins after letting the team spiral out of control last season. New defensive coordinator Perry Fewell will help, and the players have already raved about his aggressive approach and new scheme — though that was to be expected considering they didn't like the way former coordinator Bill Sheridan called a game. The ends, in particular, believe Fewell, who was the interim head coach in Buffalo late last season, will unleash them on the quarterback. They weren't happy dropping often into coverage last year. Meanwhile, offensive coordinator Kevin Gilbride has opened up the Giants' passing game, but everyone would prefer to see him run a more balanced attack than he did last year. ***GRADE: B+***

QUARTERBACKS Eli Manning had his best statistical season by far last year, finally reaching his goal of completing 60 percent of his passes (62.3) and throwing for more than 4,000 yards (4,021). He showed everyone that he could be a top-tier passer, when needed. He also continued to show his durability by fighting through a painful foot injury. He still needs to show more consistency, though. His accuracy, and by extension the passing offense, tend to disappear for long stretches at bad times. And he has yet to master the wind, which is now a complete unknown in the Giants' new $1.7 billion stadium. Also an unknown is what's behind Manning. With David Carr gone, the Giants are likely to turn to veteran Jim Sorgi, who was Peyton Manning's longtime backup in Indianapolis. Carr was a far better bet to win a couple of games in the pinch, though, which is why the Giants might give a good, long look at second-year pro Rhett Bomar, who has a promising arm but lacks experience. ***GRADE: A-***

RUNNING BACKS This is either a position of great depth or a source of great concern, depending on how quickly the backs are able to heal. Ideally, they have a great mix of power (Brandon Jacobs), speed and agility (Ahmad Bradshaw) and hands (Andre Brown) out of the backfield. But Jacobs, who had his streak of 1,000-yard seasons snapped at two in 2009, is coming off knee surgery, Bradshaw had offseason surgery on both his feet and his right ankle, and Brown had his rookie season ruined by a torn Achilles before he even got into a preseason game. There are also concerns that, even if all three are ready, this backfield is too fragile to survive 16 games. When healthy, it's a potentially devastating attack. But how often will that be? At least fullback Madison Hedgecock manages to stay healthy; he's played in all 16 games in each of his five seasons in the league. ***GRADE: B-***

RECEIVERS One year ago this position was a source of great concern, but it turned out to be the strength of the team. The Giants have a deep and diverse corps, starting with the reliable and sure-handed Steve Smith, who had the best season of any Giants receiver in history. In his third year out of USC, the 5'11" Smith caught 107 passes for 1,220 yards and seven touchdowns. The Giants also saw flashes last year of how explosive Hakeem Nicks can be; he averaged 16.8 yards on his 47 catches and scored six touchdowns. He's clearly their big-play threat. Mario Manningham and Domenik Hixon are speedy secondary receivers, but the Giants hope that 6'6" Ramses Barden develops fast enough to actually get on the field this year. With him on one side and tight end Kevin Boss on the other, the Giants could have a hard-to-stop red-zone threat on both sides of their offense. Barden, who caught only one pass as a rookie, needs to learn how to separate from defensive backs, but he has excellent hands, and his length makes it difficult for anyone to cover him. ***GRADE: A-***

Manning, Smith: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

A Real Mann's Mann Eli Manning, despite a painful foot injury last year, has started 87 consecutive games, third among active quarterbacks behind Brett Favre (285) and Peyton Manning (192). Together the Manning boys are at 279 — still six games behind Favre.

Two-Way Player, Mate Converted Australian Rules Football player Jy Bond, who will compete to replace Jeff Feagles as punter, dazzled team coaches and executives during his tryout by booming punts with his right foot … and then kicking pooch punts with his left foot.

The Good Hands Man Hakeem Nicks' hands are so big, the Giants didn't have gloves that fit him when he arrived as a rookie. He eventually found gloves, though, along with everything else thrown his way. His 47 catches for 790 yards made him the best Giants rookie receiver since Bobby Johnson in 1984.

Ain't That Just Grand In 2008, the Giants had two 1,000-yard rushers. Last year, they had two 100-yard games. Total. Ahmad Bradshaw had both of them. Brandon Jacobs, in 15 starts, never topped 92 yards.

2009 STATS

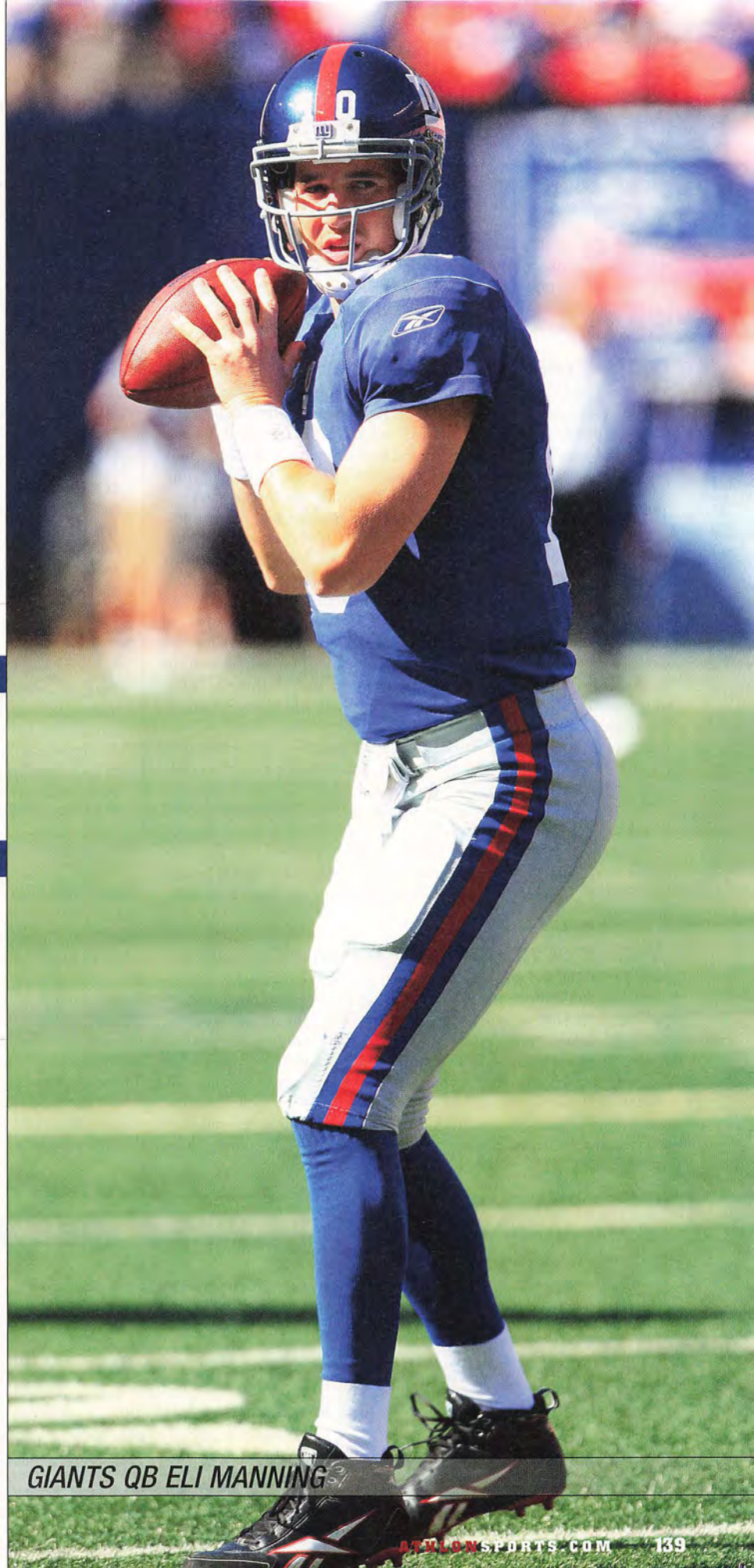
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	366.0	8	5
Rushing	114.8	17	7
Passing	251.2	11	6
Scoring	25.1	8	5
Punt Returns	10.9	T6	T3
Kick Returns	20.9	28	14
Red Zone TD %	48.2	T21	11

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	324.9	T13	7
Rushing	110.8	14	7
Passing	214.1	15	6
Scoring	26.7	30	14
Interceptions	13	T22	T9
Sacks	32	T18	10
Turnover Differential	-7	T24	T11

SCOUTING THE GIANTS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP NEW YORK

"They're going to be contenders again. They just had a bad second half of last season. Tom Coughlin is too good of a coach not to get them back this year. They have the talent. … Jason Pierre-Paul has the ability to be an elite pass-rusher. He's not there right now, but he has a lot of upside. He has freakish ability. All you have to do is watch YouTube to see that. … They obviously put a big emphasis on the D-line in the draft, so they clearly want that rotation going again where they have a lot of bodies they can throw at you. … I love Hakeem Nicks. You put on the tape and he reminds me of Michael Irvin. He can be that type of player. They did a great job of replacing Plaxico Burress. … Adding Antrel Rolle was very interesting. So they don't have dominating corners, but they now have these two ballhawk safeties. So they'll try to get you up front and then count on those ballhawk safeties to make plays."



GIANTS QB ELI MANNING

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The (mostly) old gang is entering its fourth season together, even though it looked like the gang might have to be broken up at the end of last year. The two tackles — David Diehl on the left and Kareem McKenzie on the right — will get some competition from second-year pro William Beatty, but he's the only one who has a chance to crack the starting five. What they mostly need is better play inside, where injuries took away some of the push they used to have up the middle. With Pro Bowl center Shaun O'Hara and tough guard Rich Seubert healthy, plus right guard Chris Snee, the Giants think they'll dominate the line of scrimmage again. But age is catching up to this unit, so the coaches won't be afraid to make a midseason change if they have to. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN What a huge disappointment the line was a year ago. The Giants were continually blown off the line of scrimmage and the pass rush was nonexistent. So it's no wonder the Giants used their first two draft picks on defensive linemen Jason Pierre-Paul, an end, and Linval Joseph, a tackle. They expect better play from their ends, now that Justin Tuck is recovered from shoulder surgery and Osi Umenyiora is another year removed from '08 knee surgery. But tackle is a question. They spent $58 million on Chris Canty and Rocky Bernard last year and got nothing from them. Barry Cofield didn't start playing well until the second half of the season. The Giants aren't committed to anyone, which is why they're quietly touting the big, powerful, hard-to-move Joseph as a potential starter sooner rather than later. ***GRADE: B-***

LINEBACKERS Watching the linebackers who have played for the Giants recently, it's hard to remember this team once had devastating players at this position. This unit might not be so bad, though. It has some speed with Michael Boley on the weak side and Clint Sintim on the strong side. Both showed flashes of pass-rushing ability despite injuries that spoiled their seasons last year. The major issue is the middle, where Antonio Pierce has been cut and nothing much was left behind. Jonathan Goff missed too many tackles in his brief stint last year, but he figures to get the first shot at the job. The Giants drafted a middle linebacker in the fourth round, Phillip Dillard. But don't rule out Gerris Wilkinson, a speedy outside linebacker who played the middle in college and has been plagued by injuries in his career. If he can stay healthy, he might be the dark-horse candidate for Pierce's old spot. ***GRADE: C+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS After watching their safeties continually play out of position and get burned by everyone they covered, the Giants spent $37 million on Antrel Rolle and signed Deon Grant. Rolle, in particular, has star potential. He has a great nose for the ball and the ability to deliver some hard hits. The key to rebuilding their safety corps, though, is how quickly Kenny Phillips can recover from his degenerative knee condition. He's a fast player with great instincts for finding the ball and the receiver — but that's if he's the same player he was before surgery. Meanwhile, Corey Webster has the speed and coverage ability to be an elite corner, but he tailed off last year. There could be a great battle between Terrell Thomas and the oft-injured Aaron Ross on the other side. Ross is more polished, but his hamstring kept him sidelined most of last year. ***GRADE: B***

SPECIALISTS Lawrence Tynes' job security is tenuous despite being a fairly reliable field goal kicker. The Giants have concerns about the length of his kickoffs, which he admits were too short last year. Keeping a second kicker (perhaps rookie Sam Swank) as a kickoff specialist is not impossible. Finding a punter to replace the retired Jeff Feagles, though, might be. Rookie Matt Dodge supposedly has the leg strength and hang time to do it, but it's hard to believe he'll be as good a directional kicker as Feagles was. Feagles was also the holder on field goals, so replacing him there could be an issue. Meanwhile, Hixon is the only explosive return man the Giants have and figures to handle returns. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Jy Bond	P	None	C.C. Brown	S	Free agent
Deon Grant	S	Seattle	David Carr	QB	San Francisco
Antrel Rolle	S	Arizona	Danny Clark	LB	Free agent
Jim Sorgi	QB	Indianapolis	Kevin Dockery	CB	St. Louis
			Jeff Feagles	P	Retired
			Antonio Pierce	LB	Free agent
			Fred Robbins	DT	St. Louis

The Giants believed the weakest part of their bad defense last year was the secondary, particularly at safety, and they got a serious upgrade by dumping Brown and spending $37 million on Rolle. The hard-hitting Rolle has a nose for the ball that Brown didn't and is expected to be an asset in the new defensive coordinator's aggressive scheme. Grant will provide some insurance and depth. Most of the players the Giants let go were old and on their last legs. Pierce qualifies, but he'll be hard to replace because he was the emotional leader of the defense.

FINAL ANALYSIS Believe it or not, this is largely the same team that won Super Bowl XLII and started 11–1 in 2008. Last year was a disaster, but the injury factor can't be overstated. The Giants lost half of their team, and most of the other half played hurt, yet they were still 8–8. If this team can stay in one piece — a big if — that has to be good for another couple of wins. The Giants have an explosive offense, and they have the personnel for a dominant pass rush and a decent secondary. Few teams in the NFC can match that package. So, if they keep their team together, they can be a contender. But if those injuries weren't a fluke — if they were a sign of age or just the fragile nature of their players — then the Giants could be in for another long year. Given the number of injuries they had in '09, bet on the former and expect something of a bounce-back year.

Mark Langello

NEW YORK IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Jason Pierre-Paul	DE	6-5	270	South Florida
2. Linval Joseph	DT	6-4	328	East Carolina
3. Chad Jones	S	6-2	221	LSU
4. Phillip Dillard	LB	6-0	245	Nebraska
5. Mitch Petrus	G	6-3	310	Arkansas
6. Adrian Tracy	LB	6-3	248	William & Mary
7. Matt Dodge	P	6-1	224	East Carolina

This draft was all about beefing up the defense and, in particular, the line and pass rush. Pierre-Paul will provide fresh and fast legs as the fourth end in, but the real key could be Joseph, whom GM Jerry Reese describes as "an anchor." The Giants' line got pushed around last year. If he can hold his own, he might play a lot. Same thing for Dillard, who has a shot to replace Antonio Pierce and fill the vacant middle linebacker role, assuming his senior season wasn't just a product of playing behind defensive tackle (and No. 2 overall draft pick) Ndamukong Suh. Dodge could be the team's punter.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Bomar, Rhett	QB	6-2	225	1	Sam Houston State	D5-09	D5-NYG-09
10 Manning, Eli	QB	6-4	225	6	Ole Miss	T-SD-04	D1-SD-04
19 Sorgi, Jim	QB	6-5	196	6	Wisconsin	FA-Ind-10	D6b-Ind-04
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44 Bradshaw, Ahmad	RB	5-9	198	3	Marshall	D7b-07	D7b-NYG-07
22 Brown, Andre	RB	6-0	224	1	NC State	D4-09	D4-NYG-09
39 Hedgecock, Madison	FB	6-3	266	5	North Carolina	W-StL-07	D7-StL-05
27 Jacobs, Brandon	RB	6-4	264	5	Southern Illinois	D4-05	D4-NYG-05
33 Johnson, Gartrell	RB	5-10	219	1	Colorado State	W-SD-09	D4-SD-09
48 Johnson, Jerome	FB	6-1	265	1	Nevada	FA-09	FA-StL-09
28 Ware, D.J.	RB	6-0	234	3	Georgia	FA-07	FA-Ten-07
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
13 Barden, Ramses	WR	6-6	227	1	Cal Poly	D3a-09	D3a-NYG-09
47 Beckum, Travis	TE	6-3	239	1	Wisconsin	D3b-09	D3b-NYG-09
89 Boss, Kevin	TE	6-6	253	3	Western Oregon	D5-07	D5-NYG-07
49 Butler, Carson	TE	6-4	255	1	Michigan	FA-09	FA-GB-09
85 Chandler, Scott	TE	6-7	272	1	Iowa	FA-09	D4-SD-07
80 Hagan, Derek	WR	6-2	215	4	Arizona State	FA-08	D3-Mia-06
87 Hixon, Domenik	WR	6-2	182	4	Akron	W-Den-07	D4-Den-06
82 Manningham, Mario	WR	5-11	183	2	Michigan	D3-08	D3-NYG-08
83 Moss, Sinorice	WR	5-8	185	4	Miami	D2-06	D2-NYG-06
88 Nicks, Hakeem	WR	6-0	215	1	North Carolina	D1-09	D1-NYG-09
86 Pascoe, Bear	TE	6-5	251	1	Fresno State	FA-09	D6-SF-09
12 Smith, Steve	WR	5-11	195	3	USC	D2-07	D2-NYG-07
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
65 Beatty, Will	T	6-6	307	1	Connecticut	D2b-09	D2b-NYG-09
78 Bender, Jacob	OL	6-6	316	3	Nicholls State	FA-09	D6-NYJ-07
77 Boothe, Kevin	G	6-5	315	4	Cornell	W-Oak-07	D6-Oak-06
66 Diehl, David	T	6-5	319	7	Illinois	D5-03	D5-NYG-03
61 Koets, Adam	T	6-5	300	3	Oregon State	D6-07	D6-NYG-07
67 McKenzie, Kareem	T	6-6	327	9	Penn State	FA-NYJ-05	D3-NYJ-01
60 O'Hara, Shaun	C	6-3	303	10	Rutgers	FA-Cle-04	FA-Cle-00
64 Riley, Rueben	G	6-4	305	1	Michigan	FA-09	FA-Car-07
69 Seubert, Rich	G	6-3	310	9	Western Illinois	FA-01	FA-NYG-01
76 Snee, Chris	G	6-3	317	6	Boston College	D2-04	D2-NYG-04
68 Taylor, Herb	OL	6-5	295	2	TCU	W-Den-10	D6-KC-07
79 Whimper, Guy	T	6-5	302	4	East Carolina	D4-06	D4-NYG-06
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
93 Alford, Jay	DT	6-3	304	3	Penn State	D3-07	D3-NYG-07
95 Bernard, Rocky	DT	6-3	308	8	Texas A&M	FA-Sea-09	D5-Sea-02
99 Canty, Chris	DL	6-7	304	5	Virginia	FA-Dal-09	D4-Dal-05
96 Cofield, Barry	DT	6-4	306	4	Northwestern	D4a-06	D4a-NYG-06
74 Hendricks, Dwayne	DT	6-4	300	1	Miami	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
63 Tommie Hill	DE	6-6	245	1	Colorado State	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
94 Kiwanuka, Mathias	DE	6-5	265	4	Boston College	D1-06	D1-NYG-06
71 Tollefson, Dave	DE	6-4	255	3	NW Missouri State	FA-07	D7-GB-06
91 Tuck, Justin	DE	6-5	274	5	Notre Dame	D3-05	D3-NYG-05
72 Umenyiora, Osi	DE	6-3	261	7	Troy	D2-03	D2-NYG-03
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57 Blackburn, Chase	LB	6-3	247	5	Akron	FA-05	FA-NYG-05
52 Boley, Michael	LB	6-3	223	5	Southern Miss	FA-Atl-09	D5-Atl-05
51 DeOssie, Zak	LB	6-4	249	3	Brown	D4-07	D4-NYG-07
54 Goff, Jonathan	LB	6-2	236	2	Vanderbilt	D5-08	D5-NYG-08
43 Ingram, Kenny	LB	6-6	229	1	Florida State	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
53 Kehl, Bryan	LB	6-2	237	2	BYU	D4-08	D4-NYG-08
97 Sintim, Clint	LB	6-2	256	1	Virginia	D2a-09	D2a-NYG-09
59 Wilkinson, Gerris	LB	6-3	231	4	Georgia Tech	D3-06	D3-NYG-06
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
45 Anderson, Vince	CB	6-2	205	1	Webber International	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
41 Brown, C.C.	S	6-0	208	5	UL Lafayette	FA-09	D6-Hou-05
37 Brown, Courtney	CB	6-1	204	2	Cal Poly	FA-09	D7-Dal-07
34 Grant, Deon	SS	6-2	215	10	Tennessee	FA-Sea-10	D2-Car-00
25 Johnson, Bruce	CB	5-11	182	1	Miami	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
29 Johnson, D.J.	DB	6-1	191	1	Jackson State	FA-09	FA-Den-09
20 Johnson, Michael	S	6-2	207	3	Arizona	D7a-07	D7a-NYG-07
21 Phillips, Kenny	S	6-2	210	2	Miami	D1-08	D1-NYG-08
30 Rashad, Sha'reff	S	6-0	198	1	UCF	FA-09	FA-NYG-09
26 Rolle, Antrel	S	6-0	208	5	Miami	FA-Ari-10	D1-Ari-05
31 Ross, Aaron	CB	6-0	197	3	Texas	D1-07	D1-NYG-07
24 Thomas, Terrell	CB	6-0	199	2	USC	D2-08	D2-NYG-08
23 Webster, Corey	CB	6-0	202	5	LSU	D2-05	D2-NYG-05
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
2 Bond, Jy	P	6-2	216	1	None	FA-10	FA-Mia-09
3 Swank, Sam	K	6-0	193	1	Wake Forest	FA-09	FA-Phi-09
9 Tynes, Lawrence	K	6-1	202	6	Troy	T-KC-07	FA-KC-01

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	12	Steve Smith
	87	Domenik Hixon
WR	88	Hakeem Nicks
	82	Mario Manningham
LT	66	David Diehl
	65	William Beatty
LG	69	Rich Seubert
	77	Kevin Boothe
C	60	Shaun O'Hara
	61	Adam Koets
RG	76	Chris Snee
	62	Mitch Petrus (R)
RT	67	Kareem McKenzie
	79	Guy Whimper
TE	89	Kevin Boss
	47	Travis Beckum
QB	10	Eli Manning
	19	Jim Sorgi
FB	39	Madison Hedgecock
RB	27	Brandon Jacobs
	44	Ahmad Bradshaw

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	91	Justin Tuck
	90	Jason Pierre-Paul (R)
DT	96	Barry Cofield
	97	Linval Joseph (R)
DT	99	Chris Canty
	93	Jay Alford
DE	72	Osi Umenyiora
	94	Mathias Kiwanuka
WLB	59	Michael Boley
	53	Bryan Kehl
MLB	54	Jonathan Goff
	58	Gerris Wilkinson
SLB	52	Clint Sintim
	57	Chase Blackburn
CB	23	Corey Webster
	31	Aaron Ross
CB	24	Terrell Thomas
	25	Bruce Johnson
S	26	Antrel Rolle
	20	Michael Johnson
S	21	Kenny Phillips
	34	Deon Grant

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Lawrence Tynes
KR	87	Domenik Hixon
P	6	Matt Dodge (R)
PR	87	Domenik Hixon

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Tom Coughlin
Offensive Coordinator: Kevin Gilbride
Defensive Coordinator: Perry Fewell
Special Teams Coordinator: Tom Quinn
Assistant Special Teams: Thomas McGaughey
Quarterbacks: Mike Sullivan
Running Backs: Jerald Ingram
Wide Receivers: Sean Ryan
Tight Ends: Michael Pope
Offensive Line: Pat Flaherty
Assistant Offensive Line: Jack Bicknell, Jr.
Offensive Quality Control: Kevin Gilbride Jr.
Defensive Line: Robert Nunn
Linebackers: Jim Herrmann
Secondary/Cornerbacks: Peter Giunta
Secondary/Safeties: David Merritt
Defensive Quality Control: Al Holcomb
Strength and Conditioning: Jerry Palmieri

FANTASY FLASH

Four rookie wide receivers scored a touchdown in three consecutive games during the 2009 season, but Hakeem Nicks was the only one to score a receiving TD in four straight contests. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(8–8)*

Sept. 13	Washington	W	23–17
Sept. 20	at Dallas	W	33–31
Sept. 27	at Tampa Bay	W	24– 0
Oct. 4	at Kansas City	W	27–16
Oct. 11	Oakland	W	44– 7
Oct. 18	at New Orleans	L	27–48
Oct. 25	Arizona	L	17–24
Nov. 1	at Philadelphia	L	17–40
Nov. 8	San Diego	L	20–21
Nov. 22	Atlanta (ot)	W	34–31
Nov. 26	at Denver	L	6–26
Dec. 6	Dallas	W	31–24
Dec. 13	Philadelphia	L	38–45
Dec. 21	at Washington	W	45–12
Dec. 27	Carolina	L	9–41
Jan. 3	at Minnesota	L	7–44

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Carolina	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Indianapolis	8:20 pm
Sept. 26	Tennessee	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	Chicago	8:20 pm
Oct. 10	at Houston	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	Detroit	1:00 pm
Oct. 25	at Dallas (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	at Seattle	4:05 pm
Nov. 14	Dallas	4:15 pm
Nov. 21	at Philadelphia	8:20 pm
Nov. 28	Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	Washington	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Green Bay	4:15 pm
Jan. 2	at Washington	1:00 pm

Athlon Sports

philadelphia EAGLES

4 NFC EAST FORECAST

NFC EAST · PHILADELPHIA

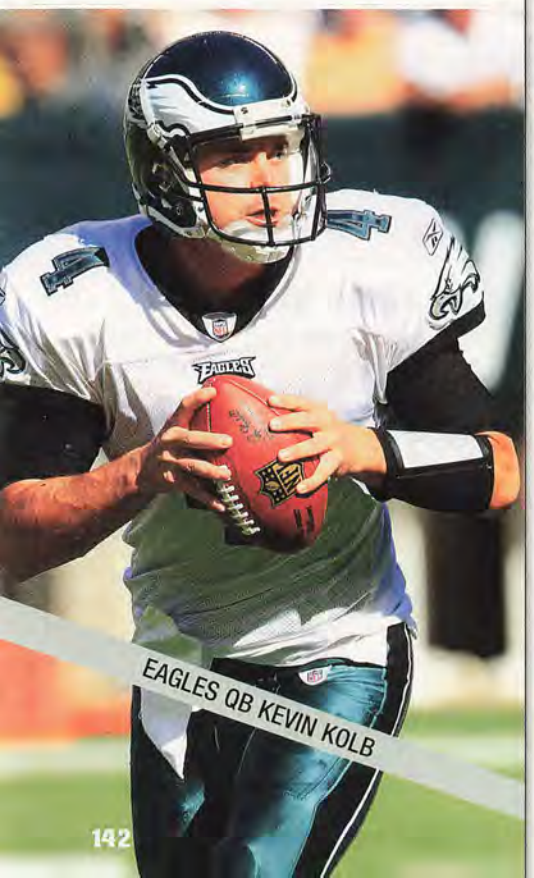
THE ORGANIZATION

CHAIRMAN/CEO: Jeffrey Lurie
GENERAL MANAGER: Howie Roseman
STADIUM: Lincoln Financial Field (67,594)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.philadelphiaeagles.com
TICKETS: 215-463-5500
TRAINING CAMP: Lehigh University (Bethlehem, Pa.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	6	
2006	10	PLAYOFFS
2007	8	
2008	9	PLAYOFFS
2009	11	PLAYOFFS

PLAYOFFS *Playoffs*



EAGLES QB KEVIN KOLB

After a decade of comfortable familiarity, cause and effect of the success enjoyed by Andy Reid and Donovan McNabb, the Eagles go into the 2010 season after undergoing seismic offseason changes. McNabb is gone, traded to Washington after 11 years, one Super Bowl appearance and five trips to the NFC Championship Game. That was the headline-grabbing move after the Eagles were manhandled by the Cowboys in consecutive weeks, the regular-season finale (24–0) and first-round playoff disaster (34–14). But the Eagles' outbox overflowed with veterans in this uncapped year: cornerback Sheldon Brown, running back Brian Westbrook, offensive lineman Shawn Andrews and a host of others were traded or released.

Going into 2010, the average age of Eagles players is about 26. Only three players, including the kicker and punter, are over 30.

After bumping their heads on the same ceiling for a decade with McNabb, the Eagles decided to start over, rebuilding from the basement up.

COACHES Reid has established himself as the winningest coach in Eagles history, but he still hasn't found a way to win that final game of the season. He seems energized by the change around him, beginning with the transition to a new quarterback. But Kevin Kolb is hardly the only change in Reid's circle. The Eagles have a new general manager, Howie Roseman. Reid made significant changes on his coaching staff, too. Special teams master Bobby April was hired to shore up a phase of the game that has been mediocre for several years. And veteran Dick Jauron was hired as secondary coach but is also expected to help young defensive coordinator Sean McDermott fill the shoes of the late, great Jim Johnson. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS Kolb begins his first season as the No. 1 quarterback after only two starts in three seasons as McNabb's understudy. Last year, Kolb beat woeful Kansas City and lost to eventual Super Bowl champion New Orleans — results the Eagles might have gotten with almost anyone lined up under center. On the positive side, Kolb became the first quarterback in NFL history to throw for over 300 yards in his first two career starts. On the negative, he threw three interceptions in the loss to New Orleans. Kolb gets the ball out quickly and accurately — strong suits in Reid's West Coast-derived offense — but doesn't have McNabb's mobility or facility with the deep ball. Also, it remains to be seen how he plays after taking a few hits or in a must-win game. Michael Vick, at the center of a mostly unsuccessful experiment in Wildcat formations (as well as reputation rehab), returns as the No. 2 quarterback. The Eagles drafted Mike Kafka in the fourth round as a developmental quarterback. ***GRADE: C***

RUNNING BACKS LeSean McCoy got more playing time as a rookie than any back in the Reid era by necessity. Westbrook was in and out of the lineup with injuries. McCoy showed flashes as a runner and receiver, but his blitz pickups illustrated why Reid is so reluctant to play rookies. With improvement as a blocker, McCoy could become a fine starter. Fullback Leonard Weaver proved himself a versatile weapon, capable of protecting the quarterback, springing McCoy or making a big play himself in both the running and passing games. Veteran Mike Bell, second-year man Eldra Buckley and rookie Charles Scott will try to establish roles for themselves in Reid's multiple-set offense. ***GRADE: C***

RECEIVERS Kolb inherits the most explosive set of receivers McNabb ever had a chance to work with in his career, a young group led by burgeoning superstar DeSean Jackson. With his speed, hands and flair for the spotlight, Jackson scored eight touchdowns of 50 yards or more last year, tying an NFL record. With Jackson drawing increased attention from defenders, Jeremy Maclin will get a chance to build on the promise of his rookie season. Maclin has all the tools but needs to break the habit of looking for the sideline rather than the end zone. Jason Avant gives Kolb the big-bodied, fearless slot receiver who can be counted on in third-and-long situations. Tight end Brent Celek was a revelation in his first full year as a starter, finding seams in the coverage, catching everything thrown his way and breaking tackles to turn check-downs into chain-movers. The Eagles are counting on a young player — knee-rehabbing Cornelius Ingram or rookie Clay Harbor — to emerge as a reliable complement to Celek. ***GRADE: B***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Eagles attempted to overhaul this unit last year after a decade with bookend tackles Tra Thomas and Jon Runyan. Things did not go as planned, yet the line held up until the last couple of games and has a chance to be solid this year. The enigmatic Andrews was injured and unable to replace Runyan at right tackle, but Winston Justice turned out to be just fine there. He claimed the job for years to come. Stacy Andrews, Shawn's brother, never

Kolb, Jackson: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Persistence Pays Off Howie Roseman went to law school because he thought mastering the salary cap would give him an edge in his quest to get an NFL job. Earlier this year, after a decade of working his way up the organizational ladder, Roseman was named general manager of the Eagles.

Helping the Enemy? The Eagles raised eyebrows by trading franchise quarterback Donovan McNabb within the NFC East. But Reid doesn't think in those terms. He made a draft-day trade with Dallas three years ago and another this year. "This is what we do," Reid says. "I don't get real concerned with anybody but us and what we need to do to become a better football team. I don't focus on other teams."

Battle of Words When Reid said that cornerback Asante Samuel — whose tackling habits are as bad as his ball skills are special — could "get better" this year, Samuel had an interesting response. He sent a text message to Derrick Gunn of Comcast Sportsnet. "The whole team needs to improve from the front office, to the head coach to the players," Samuel wrote. "And when that happens, things will be better."

2009 STATS

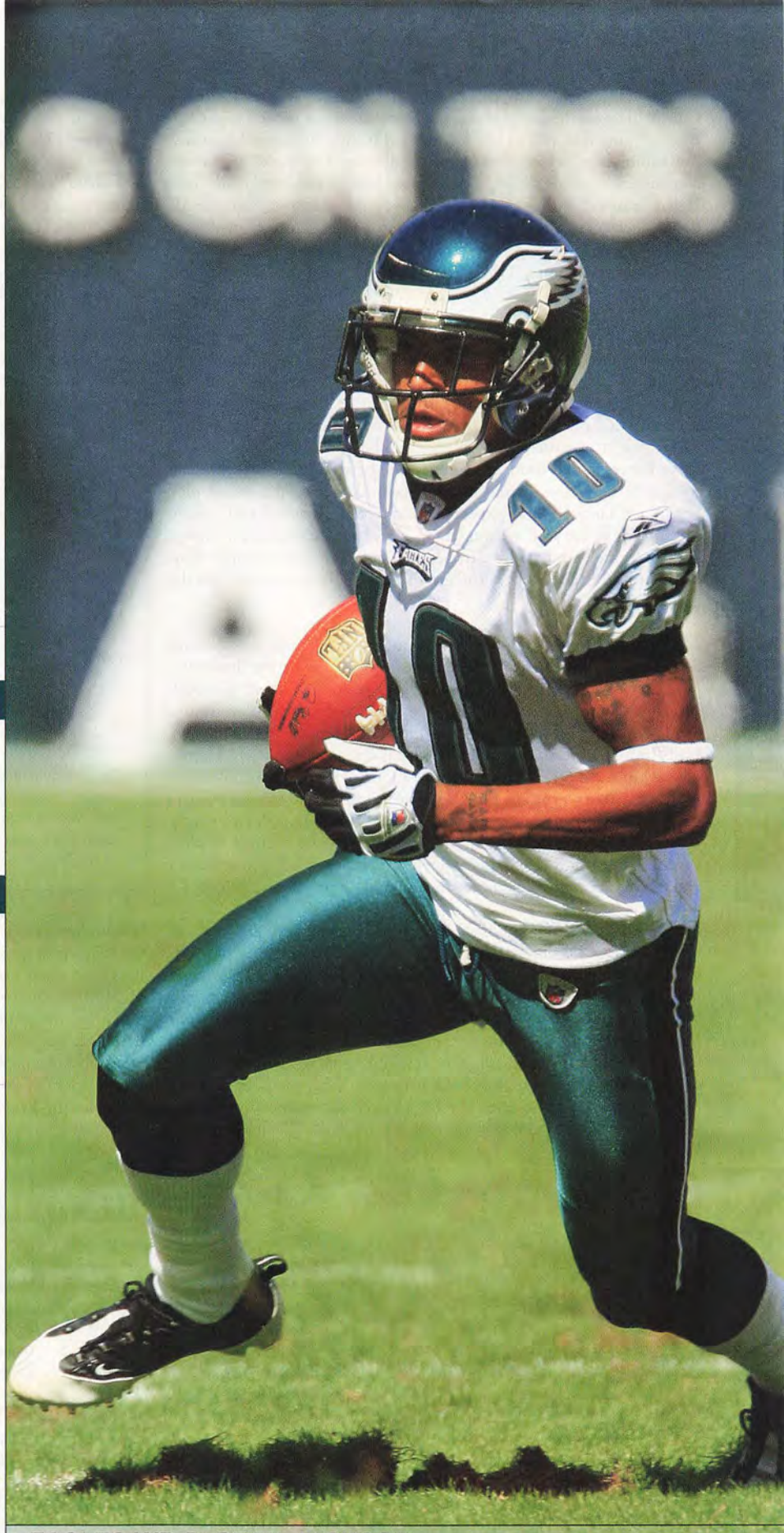
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	357.9	11	6
Rushing	102.3	22	9
Passing	255.6	10	5
Scoring	26.8	5	4
Punt Returns	13.5	1	1
Kick Returns	20.5	T29	15
Red Zone TD %	48.1	T23	12

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	321.1	12	6
Rushing	104.7	9	5
Passing	216.4	17	7
Scoring	21.1	19	9
Interceptions	25	4	3
Sacks	44	T3	T2
Turnover Differential	+15	2	2

SCOUTING THE EAGLES

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP PHILADELPHIA

"They missed Brian Dawkins a lot. I also think losing Stewart Bradley hurt them a lot. But they missed (defensive coordinator) Jimmy Johnson more than anybody. He was the most underrated coach in the NFL. You never could figure out what they were going to do with Jimmy Johnson. It wasn't that way with that defense last year. … They've had a lot of losses over the last two years — Jim Johnson, Brian Dawkins, now Brian Westbrook and Donovan McNabb. That's a lot of heart and leadership gone from that team. How much can they take? … Kevin Kolb is no McNabb and he's probably not even Aaron Rodgers, but don't count on him being a huge drop-off. Andy Reid is pretty smart. He sees something. A good arm, probably better instincts than we realize. He wouldn't make this change if he didn't think he could win with the kid. … They should be competitive next year, but two or three years down the road, this team could be really, really good."



EAGLES WR DESEAN JACKSON

established himself as the right guard, but Max Jean-Gilles and Nick Cole held down the fort. Left tackle Jason Peters was named to the Pro Bowl. At times, he played like he deserved it. At others, notably in season-ending blowout losses in Dallas, he did not. The Eagles need more consistency on Kolb's blind side. Peters, Justice and left guard Todd Herremans will be back. The other two spots are not quite set. If Jamaal Jackson can return from a late-season knee injury, he will be at center. If not, Cole and Mike McGlynn will compete for that spot. Cole could also compete with Stacy Andrews and Jean-Gilles at right guard. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Eagles traded for one defensive end, traded up for another in the first round and selected two more later in the draft. That tells you how desperate they are to improve a unit that was inconsistent against the run and ineffective in pressuring quarterbacks. Trent Cole remains at right end, where he has been productive despite extra attention from blockers. The solid but unspectacular Mike Patterson and Brodrick Bunkley will be at tackle, although there should be new faces in the rotation behind them. First-round pick Brandon Graham will be expected to step right in at left end, taking pressure off Cole and placing it on opposing quarterbacks. Darryl Tapp, acquired in a trade with Seattle, and draft picks Daniel Te'o-Nesheim and Ricky Sapp will all get chances to prove they can rush the passer. ***GRADE: C***

LINEBACKERS One apparent consequence of changes at GM and defensive coordinator is a new emphasis on quality at the linebacker position. Either that, or the Eagles were really bad there in 2009. Along with the return of middle linebacker Stewart Bradley from a torn ACL, the Eagles have added Ernie Sims (from Detroit) and Alex Hall (from Cleveland) in trades, as well as Keenan Clayton and Jamar Chaney in the draft. The expectation: a total overhaul of the linebacking corps. Sims, a former first-round pick lost in the Detroit wilderness, is expected to make a real impact with his ability to cover tight ends and running backs. That will be especially important if Bradley has lost some of his cover ability due to the injury. Hall, Moise Fokou and Akeem Jordan will compete for the other outside spot. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Eagles' failure to find an adequate replacement for Brian Dawkins at free safety created a domino effect of problems for their defense last year. The Eagles wound up allowing 27 passing touchdowns, tied for eighth-worst in the league. With second-round pick Nate Allen, second-year man Macho Harris and free agent pickup Marlin Jackson, someone should be able to fill the spot next to strong safety Quintin Mikell. The new hole is at right cornerback, a spot held down for years by Sheldon Brown. With the poor-tackling Asante Samuel at left corner, the Eagles need someone who can be a force against the run and still run with top receivers. Ellis Hobbs, who suffered a season-ending neck injury last November, seems like a long shot to be that guy. Nickel corner Joselio Hanson is effective enough in that role, but seems more vulnerable with more exposure. ***GRADE: D***

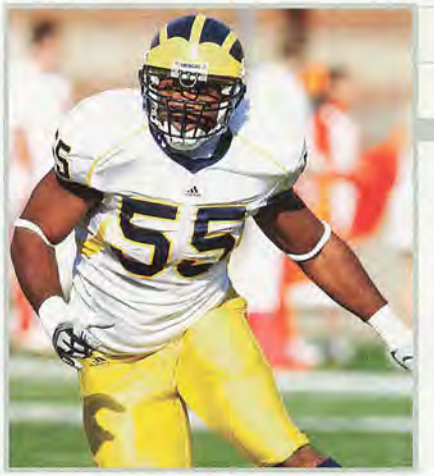
SPECIALISTS The influx of young players, especially on defense, should give April plenty of material for molding better coverage teams. In the past, Reid has taken return duties away from the likes of Westbrook and Lito Sheppard after they established themselves as full-time starters. But DeSean Jackson, a threat to score every time he handles the ball, might just be too good to replace on punt returns. Quintin Demps is likely to be the main kickoff return guy. Kicker David Akers resuscitated his career with a Pro Bowl-caliber 2009 after it appeared he might be on the down side. The 35-year-old Akers will add to his franchise records for field goals and points. Punter Sav Rocca had a so-so year. The former Australian rules football player has a big leg but struggles with placement and pressure kicks. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Alex Hall	LB	Cleveland	Shawn Andrews	G	Free agent
Mike Bell	RB	New Orleans	Reggie Brown	WR	Tampa Bay
Marlin Jackson	S	Indianapolis	Sheldon Brown	CB	Cleveland
Ernie Sims	LB	Detroit	Chris Clemons	DE	Seattle
Darryl Tapp	DE	Seattle	Kevin Curtis	WR	Free agent
			Chris Gocong	LB	Cleveland
			Sean Jones	S	Tampa Bay
			Donovan McNabb	QB	Washington
			Brian Westbrook	RB	Free agent

The departure of McNabb and Westbrook illustrates the team's strategy to get younger, unload some burdensome contracts and try to rebuild on the fly. The team was not particularly aggressive in a free agent market limited by the absence of a collective bargaining agreement. With a couple of trades, the Eagles added Sims, Tapp and Hall for depth and competition in a defensive overhaul.

FINAL ANALYSIS Teams often have to take a step back in order to take two steps forward, and 2010 figures to be a step-back season for an Eagles franchise that went to the postseason eight times in McNabb's 11 seasons. Kolb's learning curve, as well as the speed with which the overhauled defense comes together, will dictate how big a step back and, ultimately, whether the team can take that final step McNabb was unable to take — winning a Super Bowl. That will be a conversation for 2011 or 2012, however. This year, for the first time in a decade, the Eagles have an unproven defense and the least accomplished quarterback in a very competitive NFC East.



John Grieshop

PHILADELPHIA IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Brandon Graham	DE	6-2	268	Michigan
2. Nate Allen	DB	6-0	207	South Florida
3. Daniel Te'o-Nesheim	DE	6-3	263	Washington
4. Trevard Lindley	CB	5-11	183	Kentucky
4. Keenan Clayton	LB	6-1	229	Oklahoma
4. Mike Kafka	QB	6-3	225	Northwestern
4. Clay Harbor	TE	6-2	252	Missouri State
5. Ricky Sapp	DE	6-4	252	Clemson
5. Riley Cooper	WR	6-3	222	Florida
6. Charles Scott	RB	5-11	238	LSU
7. Jamar Chaney	LB	6-0	242	Miss. State
7. Jeff Owens	DT	6-1	304	Georgia
7. Kurt Coleman	S	5-11	192	Ohio State

It is no coincidence that the trade-happy Eagles came away with a league-high 13 players from the 2010 draft, or that nine of the picks were on the defensive side of the ball. With the way their defense collapsed, and with a young nucleus of offensive players in place, the Eagles needed an infusion of talent and speed. They traded up to get Graham, a smallish defensive end with a relentless motor and a knack for getting to the quarterback. With the second-round pick obtained in the trade for one franchise icon, Donovan McNabb, they hope they landed a replacement for another, Brian Dawkins. They believe Allen has the cover skills to patch up a very leaky secondary. It would be disappointing if those two weren't starters.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Kolb, Kevin	QB	6-3	218	3	Houston	D2a-07	D2a-Phi-07
7 Vick, Michael	QB	6-0	215	8	Virginia Tech	FA-09	D1-Atl-01
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Bell, Mike	RB	6-0	225	4	Arizona	FA-NO-10	FA-Den-06
34 Buckley, Eldra	RB	5-9	207	1	Chattanooga	W-SD-09	FA-SD-07
25 McCoy, LeSean	RB	5-10	198	1	Pittsburgh	D2-09	D2-Phi-09
43 Weaver, Leonard	FB	6-0	250	5	Carson-Newman	FA-Sea-09	FA-Sea-05
32 Wright, Dwayne	FB	5-11	228	1	Fresno State	FA-10	D4-Buf-07
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
81 Avant, Jason	WR	6-0	212	4	Michigan	D4b-06	D4b-Phi-06
84 Baskett, Hank	WR	6-4	220	4	New Mexico	FA-Ind-10	FA-Min-06
87 Celek, Brent	TE	6-4	255	3	Cincinnati	D5b-07	D5b-Phi-07
11 Collins, Dobson	WR	6-2	178	1	Gardner-Webb	FA-09	FA-SF-09
88 Ingram, Cornelius	TE	6-4	245	1	Florida	D5a-09	D5a-Phi-09
16 Chad Hall	WR	5-8	180	0	Air Force	FA-10	FA-Phi-10
10 Jackson, DeSean	WR	5-10	175	2	California	D2b-08	D2b-Phi-08
18 Maclin, Jeremy	WR	6-0	198	1	Misscuri	D1-09	D1-Phi-09
84 Norwood, Jordan	WR	5-11	179	1	Penn State	FA-09	FA-Cle-09
89 Rucker, Martin	TE	6-5	260	2	Misscuri St.	FA-09	D4-Cle-08
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
76 Andrews, Stacy	G/T	6-7	342	6	Ole Miss	FA-Cin-09	D4-Cin-04
59 Cole, Nick	G/C	6-0	350	4	New Mexico State	FA-06	FA-Phi-06
65 Dunlap, King	T	6-8	310	2	Auburn	D7-08	D7-Phi-08
79 Herremans, Todd	G/T	6-6	321	5	Saginaw Valley St.	D4b-05	D4b-Phi-05
75 Isdaner, Greg	G	6-4	325	1	West Virginia	FA-10	FA-Dal-09
67 Jackson, Jamaal	C	6-4	330	6	Delaware State	FA-03	FA-Phi-03
62 Jean-Gilles, Max	G	6-3	358	4	Georgia	D4a-06	D4a-Phi-06
74 Justice, Winston	T	6-6	320	4	USC	D2-06	D2-Phi-06
77 McGlynn, Mike	G	6-4	315	2	Pittsburgh	D4a-08	D4a-Phi-08
71 Peters, Jason	T	6-4	340	6	Arkansas	T-Buf-09	FA-Buf-04
66 Reynolds, Dallas	C	6-4	314	1	BYU	FA-09	FA-Phi-09
61 Shipley, A.Q.	C	6-1	315	1	Penn State	FA-10	D7a-Pit-09
78 Tupou, Fenuki	T	6-5	314	1	Oregon	D5c-09	D5c-Phi-09
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
95 Abiamiri, Victor	DE	6-4	267	3	Notre Dame	D2b-07	D2b-Phi-07
97 Bunkley, Brodrick	DT	6-2	306	4	Florida State	D1-06	D1-Phi-06
58 Cole, Trent	DE	6-3	270	5	Cincinnati	D5a-05	D5a-Phi-05
90 Dixon, Antonio	DT	6-3	322	1	Miami	W-Was-09	FA-Was-09
93 Laws, Trevor	DT	6-1	304	2	Notre Dame	D2a-08	D2a-Phi-08
75 Parker, Juqua	DE	6-2	250	9	Oklahoma State	FA-Ten-05	FA-Ten-01
98 Patterson, Mike	DT	6-1	300	5	USC	D1-05	D1-Phi-05
91 Tapp, Darryl	DE	6-1	270	4	Virginia Tech	T-Sea-10	D2-Sea-06
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
55 Bradley, Stewart	LB	6-4	255	3	Nebraska	D3a-07	D3a-Phi-07
53 Fokou, Moise	LB	6-1	233	1	Maryland	D7b-09	D7b-Phi-09
96 Gaither, Omar	LB	6-2	235	4	Tennessee	D5b-06	D5b-Phi-06
57 Hall, Alex	LB	6-5	250	2	St. Augustine's	T-Cle-10	D7-Cle-08
56 Jordan, Akeem	LB	6-1	230	3	James Madison	FA-07	FA-Phi-07
51 Mays, Joe	LB	5-11	246	2	North Dakota State	D6b-08	D6b-Phi-08
50 Sims, Ernie	LB	6-0	230	4	Florida State	T-Det-10	D1-Det-06
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
39 Demps, Quintin	S	5-11	206	2	UTEP	D4b-08	D4b-Phi-08
21 Hanson, Joselio	CB	5-9	185	5	Texas Tech	FA-06	FA-SF-03
24 Harris, Macho	S	5-11	198	1	Virginia Tech	D5b-09	D5b-Phi-09
31 Hobbs, Ellis	CB	5-9	195	5	Iowa State	T-NE-09	D3-NE-05
28 Jackson, Marlin	S	6-0	196	5	Michigan	FA-Ind-10	D1-Ind-05
27 Mikell, Quintin	S	5-10	206	7	Boise State	FA-03	FA-Phi-03
23 Patterson, Dimitri	CB	5-10	190	4	Tuskegee	FA-09	FA-Was-05
30 Pope, Geoffrey	CB	6-0	186	2	Howard	FA-Cin-09	FA-Mia-07
22 Samuel, Asante	CB	5-10	185	7	Central Florida	FA-NE-08	D4-NE-03
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
2 Akers, David	K	5-10	200	11	Louisville	FA-99	FA-Car-97
3 Brooks, Durant	P	6-0	204	1	Georgia Tech	FA-10	D6-Was-08
46 Dorenbos, Jon	LS	6-0	250	7	UTEP	FA-06	FA-Buf-03
6 Rocca, Sav	P	6-5	265	3	None	FA-07	FA-Phi-07

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	10	DeSean Jackson
	81	Jason Avant
WR	18	Jeremy Maclin
	84	Hank Baskett
LT	71	Jason Peters
	79	Todd Herremans
LG	79	Todd Herremans
	77	Mike McGlynn
C	59	Nick Cole
	67	Jamaal Jackson
RG	76	Stacy Andrews
	62	Max Jean-Gilles
RT	74	Winston Justice
	65	King Dunlap
TE	87	Brent Celek
	88	Cornelius Ingram
QB	4	Kevin Kolb
	7	Michael Vick
FB	43	Leonard Weaver
	32	Dwayne Wright
RB	25	LeSean McCoy
	26	Mike Bell

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	54	Brandon Graham (R)
	75	Juqua Parker
DT	98	Mike Patterson
	93	Trevor Laws
DT	97	Brodrick Bunkley
	90	Antonio Dixon
DE	58	Trent Cole
	91	Darryl Tapp
WLB	56	Akeem Jordan
	57	Alex Hall
MLB	55	Stewart Bradley
	96	Omar Gaither
SLB	50	Ernie Sims
	53	Moise Fokou
CB	22	Asante Samuel
	21	Joselio Hanson
CB	31	Ellis Hobbs
	23	Dimitri Patterson
SS	27	Quintin Mikell
	39	Quintin Demps
FS	29	Nate Allen (R)
	28	Marlin Jackson

SPECIALISTS

K	2	David Akers
KR	39	Quintin Demps
P	6	Sav Rocca
PR	10	DeSean Jackson

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Andy Reid
Asst. Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator: Marty Mornhinweg
Defensive Coordinator: Sean McDermott
Special Teams Coordinator: Bobby April
Special Teams Quality Control: Jeff Nixon
Quarterbacks: James Urban
Running Backs: Ted Williams
Wide Receivers: David Culley
Tight Ends: Tom Melvin
Offensive Line: Juan Castillo
Offensive Quality Control: Doug Pederson
Defensive Line: Rory Segrest
Linebackers: Bill Shuey
Assistant Linebackers: Mike Caldwell
Senior Assistant/Defensive Backs: Dick Jauron
Defensive Quality Control: Michael Zordich
Head Strength and Conditioning: Barry Rubin

FANTASY FLASH

For the first time since 2002, someone other than Brian Westbrook led the Eagles in rushing last season. **LeSean McCoy** did the honors, producing 637 yards on 155 carries as a rookie. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(11–5)*

Sept. 13	at Carolina	W	38–10
Sept. 20	New Orleans	L	22–48
Sept. 27	Kansas City	W	34–14
Oct. 11	Tampa Bay	W	33–14
Oct. 18	at Oakland	L	9–13
Oct. 26	at Washington	W	27–17
Nov. 1	N.Y. Giants	W	40–17
Nov. 8	Dallas	L	16–20
Nov. 15	at San Diego	L	23–31
Nov. 22	at Chicago	W	24–20
Nov. 29	Washington	W	27–24
Dec. 6	at Atlanta	W	34– 7
Dec. 13	at N.Y. Giants	W	45–38
Dec. 20	San Francisco	W	27–13
Dec. 27	Denver	W	30–27
Jan. 3	at Dallas	L	0–24
Postseason			
Jan. 9	at Dallas	L	14–34

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Green Bay	4:15 pm
Sept. 19	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Jacksonville	4:05 pm
Oct. 3	Washington	4:15 pm
Oct. 10	at San Francisco	8:20 pm
Oct. 17	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	Indianapolis	4:15 pm
Nov. 15	at Washington (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 21	N.Y. Giants	8:20 pm
Nov. 28	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Dec. 2	Houston (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 12	at Dallas	8:20 pm
Dec. 19	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Minnesota	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Dallas	1:00 pm

Athlon Sports

washington REDSKINS

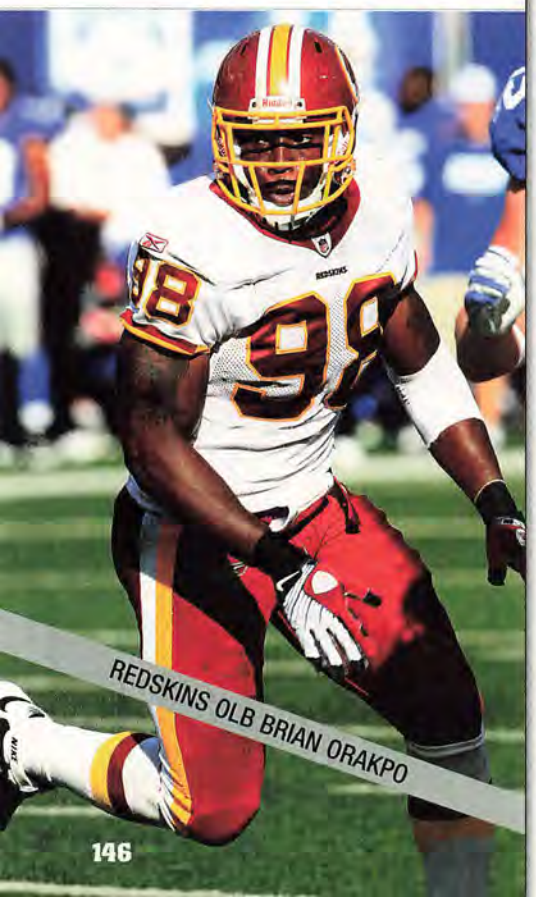
3 NFC EAST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER: Daniel Snyder
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/HEAD COACH: Mike Shanahan
GENERAL MANAGER: Bruce Allen
STADIUM: FedExField (91,665)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.redskins.com
TICKETS: 301-276-6800
TRAINING CAMP: Redskins Park (Ashburn, Va.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	10	PLAYOFFS
2006	5	
2007	9	PLAYOFFS
2008	8	
2009	4	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



REDSKINS OLB BRIAN ORAKPO

An offseason of change requires name tags for many around Redskins Park, but the optimism and energy level match that of the Joe Gibbs years. With a new front office and coaching staff, a new quarterback and new schemes on both sides of the ball, the Redskins will resemble last year's group only in the uniforms they wear. General manager Bruce Allen has adopted the motto preferred by his father, legendary coach George Allen: "The future is now." The sense of urgency that motto implies is admirable for a team that won only four games a year ago, but the idea of improving to a playoff contender in one year is mighty ambitious.

COACHES The team's biggest offseason upgrade came at the head coaching position, where Mike Shanahan replaces Jim Zorn after the latter had two forgettable seasons in Washington. With three Super Bowl rings — two as Denver's head coach and one from his days as San Francisco's offensive coordinator — Shanahan commanded instant respect in the locker room. His first hire was his son, Kyle Shanahan, who spent the previous two seasons as Houston's offensive coordinator. The offense will be co-authored by the two Shanahans, and though it will be predicated on the run, the passing attack will bear stronger resemblance to that of the recent Texans teams. Houston had the top-ranked passing offense in the league last season under the younger Shanahan, who will also handle playcalling duties in Washington. Shanahan hired Jim Haslett as defensive coordinator and has a great respect for Haslett's expertise with the 3-4 scheme. Eleven of the team's 14 position coaches are new faces, and it's a group that includes longtime Shanahan assistants Bobby Turner (running backs) and Bob Slowik (defensive backs). ***GRADE: A-***

QUARTERBACKS Amid all the change in Washington, none is greater than that at quarterback. Six-time Pro Bowler Donovan McNabb, acquired in a trade with Philadelphia, replaces Jason Campbell. McNabb has spent the entirety of his 11-season career in the same offense, and though Shanahan will also rely on a West Coast system, it will be an adjustment for McNabb, 33. Though some have criticized McNabb's accuracy over the years, the biggest question mark for the Redskins will be his durability. He has played all 16 games only once in the past six seasons. There's a sharp drop-off from McNabb to his backup, though Rex Grossman is familiar with the Redskins' new system, having played under Kyle Shanahan as Matt Schaub's backup. ***GRADE: B+***

RUNNING BACKS Clinton Portis will be 29 by Week 1, is coming off a season that was cut short by a concussion and has shown marks of decline in his speed and cutting ability. Yet he's excited to be reunited with Shanahan, for whom he had 29 touchdowns and 3,099 yards over his first two years in the league in Denver. But he'll have company this year in a revamped backfield that would make fantasy owners drool — if this were 2006. Shanahan hopes the new blood (new to Washington, anyway) can help improve the league's sixth-worst running attack. The team acquired former Pro Bowlers Larry Johnson, who finished the '09 season in Cincinnati after being released by Kansas City, and Willie Parker, who lost his starting job in Pittsburgh to Rashard Mendenhall. Though he's two years older than Portis, Johnson has 755 fewer career carries, but he hasn't topped 1,000 yards since 2006. Parker, 29, saw his yards-per-carry decline every year from 2004-08. Shanahan's zone-blocking scheme favors one-cut runners who move laterally and dart through a hole. Johnson is considered a downhill runner who's better at powering his way between the tackles. Portis will have to show that he can still recognize a hole, and Parker must show he still has some speed. ***GRADE: C+***

RECEIVERS The Redskins are counting on their scheme and new quarterback to take better advantage of the receivers than the previous staff was able to do. Santana Moss will be 31 by Week 1 and is still a productive receiver. But Shanahan's best Denver offenses usually had a No. 1 receiver who was bigger than the 5'10" Moss. This could be a breakout season for either Devin Thomas or Malcolm Kelly, both of whom were drafted in the second round in 2008. Each has shown flashes of promise, but consistency has been lacking. Kelly will need to improve his route-running in an offense that relies heavily on timing. The two-tight end offense will be a staple of the passing attack, and Washington has a pair of good receiving tight ends. When Chris Cooley suffered a season-ending injury in Week 7 last season, Fred Davis replaced him and finished the year as the team's third-leading pass-catcher with twice as many touchdowns (six) as anyone else. ***GRADE: C***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The team had been reluctant to upgrade its dismal line the past couple of seasons, but it was one of the first areas Shanahan addressed. A season ago, Campbell was

Orakpo: Athlon Sports; McNabb: Chris McGrath/Getty Images

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Burgundy, Gold and Lots of Green During the off-season, the Redskins wrote Albert Haynesworth a check for $21 million — believed to be the largest check ever cut in the NFL — to satisfy the bonuses in his megacontract. He's not sitting on all that money. He upgraded his speedboat to a 48-foot catamaran called Terminator.

Important Pipeline The Redskins have drafted a player each of the past three seasons who played his high school football at Longview High in Longview, Texas. Tackle Trent Williams, linebacker Robert Henson and receiver Malcolm Kelly were all Lobo teammates and friends.

Scare Tactics In addition to being an avid potter, tight end Chris Cooley is dabbling in movies. He served as executive producer and actor on the independent, low-budget horror flick *Ghosts Don't Exist*, which premiered this spring and is expected to be available on DVD later this year.

Monkey Business Safety LaRon Landry has a pet monkey named Gucci, a 1-year-old white-faced capuchin.

2009 STATS

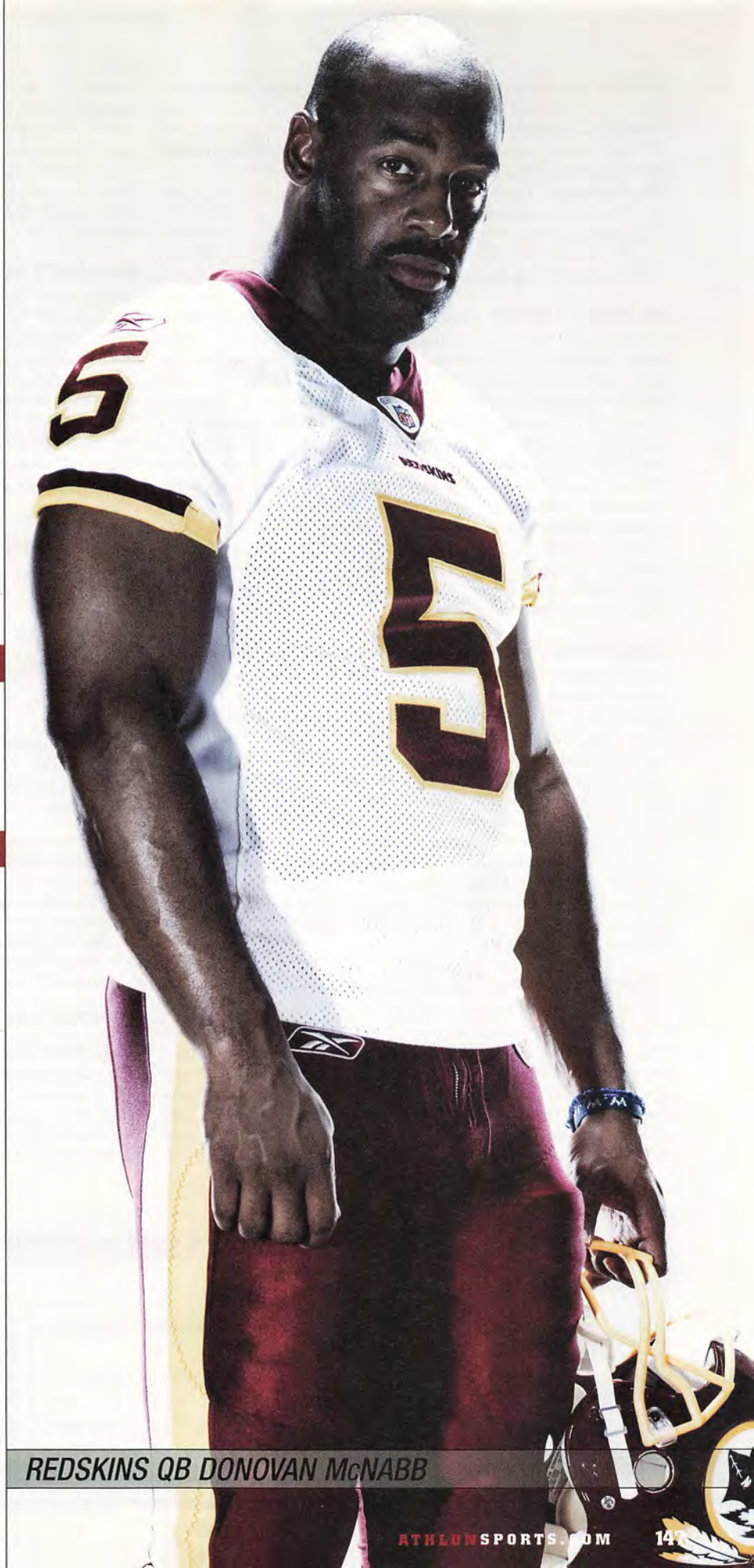
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	312.5	22	11
Rushing	94.4	27	14
Passing	218.1	16	10
Scoring	16.6	26	13
Punt Returns	4.8	30	14
Kick Returns	21.7	24	12
Red Zone TD %	56.5	7	5

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	319.7	10	5
Rushing	112.4	16	9
Passing	207.2	T8	3
Scoring	21.0	18	8
Interceptions	11	T26	T12
Sacks	40	T8	6
Turnover Differential	-11	28	14

SCOUTING THE REDSKINS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP WASHINGTON

"They just got better with Donovan McNabb. I wish he had gone somewhere outside the division. They are the most improved team in the division. … Mike Shanahan and McNabb will get that offense moving. They could easily turn half those losses into wins. And that cupboard isn't exactly bare. The defense is pretty good. … Brian Orakpo didn't have as good a year as everybody made it out to be. You can run right at Orakpo. Now, he did have a lot of sacks, but look who they came against. They were mostly against inferior players. He's not a player you fear. … Albert Haynesworth is another Danny Snyder free agency whiff. When he plays, he is dominant. But he plays only when he wants to play, which isn't that often. … Larry Johnson is better suited to Shanahan's offense than Clinton Portis. His philosophy is one cut. … I just think the whole offense was upgraded because of the system more so than any players they brought in. Shanahan's system works."



REDSKINS QB DONOVAN McNABB

tion after Shanahan replaced three '09 starters up front. But with the retirement of six-time Pro Bowl left tackle Chris Samuels, rookie Trent Williams will have big shoes to fill. Williams, the fourth overall pick of the draft, is as fast and athletic as any lineman in the draft but also had questions surrounding his work ethic. He is a good fit for the zone-blocking scheme. The Redskins will give guard Mike Williams, a former first-round pick who didn't appear in any games from 2006-08, the chance to realize his potential. Veteran Artis Hicks should get first crack at right tackle. Left guard Derrick Dockery and center Casey Rabach are the sole returning starters. ***GRADE: C-***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Under Haslett's direction, the defense is expected to rely heavily on a 3-4 scheme, and coaches will likely experiment with a variety of combinations on the line to find the right fit. Step 1 will be deciding where Albert Haynesworth fits into the equation. Haynesworth has played in a 4-3 his entire career and does not envision himself as a space-eating nosetackle. He wants to make plays and reach the quarterback, and coaches could use him at both end and nosetackle at times. Finding a reliable nose is key to the defense, and the Redskins signed Maake Kemoeatu, who missed all of last season with a torn Achilles, hoping he'll fully recover. They also traded for Adam Carriker, a former first-round draft pick who was a 3-technique tackle for St. Louis but also missed all of last season with an injury. Haslett thinks he can better utilize Carriker's skill set. Depending on how Haynesworth is used, Phillip Daniels might have to win back his starting job at end. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS Some of the biggest offseason classroom work involves the linebackers, who will be learning new assignments in the 3-4. London Fletcher, coming off his first Pro Bowl season, and fifth-year veteran Rocky McIntosh will likely anchor the inside positions. Fletcher is a tackling machine and is as reliable as any linebacker in the league, but he'll be learning new responsibilities at age 35. Brian Orakpo, coming off a Pro Bowl rookie campaign, showed last season that he could make the move from end to linebacker. He still struggles dropping back in coverage, but in the team's new defense he should find himself rushing the edge much more, which is where he excels (and how he amassed 11 sacks a season ago). The other outside linebacker spot is more of a question mark. Andre Carter will be moved from end, where he had 11 sacks in 2009, but he struggled in coverage as a 3-4 outside linebacker with the 49ers in 2005. Chris Draft, signed as a free agent in May, is an option, as well. ***GRADE: B+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Though the Redskins were among the league's top-10 teams in pass defense a year ago, they tied for 26th in interceptions (11) and were 28th in turnover differential (minus-11). Their focus will be to improve those numbers drastically. Their top cornerback, DeAngelo Hall, is a gambler who had four interceptions a year ago but also showed spotty tackling ability. On the other side, Carlos Rogers started 15 games in '09 and failed to notch a single interception. Coaches will work with Rogers on his hands, but they especially need to focus on double-moves, which cost Rogers and the Redskins mightily last year. The team will shy away from the typical division of duties among the safeties, attempting to play both safeties a bit closer to the line of scrimmage, dividing the field in half. That approach would take better advantage of LaRon Landry's strength, size and hitting abilities. Under former coordinator Greg Blache, defensive backs were used strictly in coverage, but Haslett is expected to have a variety of blitz schemes that send the corners and safeties to chase the quarterback. ***GRADE: B-***

SPECIALISTS The special teams carry a degree of uncertainty. Neither Graham Gano nor Justin Medlock has more than a season under his belt as an NFL kicker, and the Redskins could start shopping for a veteran if neither manages to seize the job during camp. Josh Bidwell will handle punting duties, but he's five years removed from his lone Pro Bowl appearance. The team also parted ways with its primary kickoff returner (Rock Cartwright) and punt returner (Antwaan Randle El). The Redskins drafted receiver Terrence Austin, who has experience with both punt and kickoff returns, and will likely give cornerback Phillip Buchanon a shot at returning punts. Hall and Moss could also help with punts, and Thomas has shown some promise returning kicks. ***GRADE: C-***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Josh Bidwell	P	Tampa Bay	Jason Campbell	QB	Oakland
Phillip Buchanon	CB	Detroit	Rock Cartwright	RB	Oakland
Adam Carriker	DT	St. Louis	Todd Collins	QB	Free agent
Chris Draft	LB	Buffalo	Cornelius Griffin	DT	Free agent
Rex Grossman	QB	Houston	Antwaan Randle El	WR	Pittsburgh
Artis Hicks	T/G	Minnesota	Chris Samuels	LT	Retired
Maake Kemoeatu	NT	Carolina	Hunter Smith	P	Free agent
Larry Johnson	RB	Cincinnati	Randy Thomas	G	Free agent
Donovan McNabb	QB	Philadelphia			
Willie Parker	RB	Pittsburgh			

GM Bruce Allen is leaning on a variety of veterans to plug holes in the starting lineup. No acquisition was bigger than McNabb, who instantly brings life to an offense that has struggled for years. The Redskins also hope Parker and Johnson will provide competition for Clinton Portis in the backfield. The team added five veteran defensive linemen, hoping one of them proves to be the answer at nosetackle. The Redskins purged several of their own veterans — including 10 in a single day — but no one will be more difficult to replace than Samuels. The six-time Pro Bowler retired in March.

FINAL ANALYSIS Improving on a 4–12 record won't be difficult, but with a tough schedule, topping the .500 mark might be too much to ask. The team is banking on McNabb remaining healthy and at least one of the running backs proving he still has some gas in the tank. But more than likely, the Redskins are still a season away from competing for the NFC East title.

WASHINGTON IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Trent Williams	OT	6-5	314	Oklahoma
4. Perry Riley	LB	6-0	238	LSU
6. Dennis Morris	TE/FB	6-2	265	Louisiana Tech
7. Terrence Austin	WR	5-11	172	UCLA
7. Erik Cook	C/G	6-6	318	New Mexico
7. Selvish Capers	OT	6-4	308	West Virginia

The Redskins traded away their second-round pick as part of the Donovan McNabb deal, and a third-rounder and fifth-rounder were lost in other deals. Though they managed to turn four picks into six, they still walked away with only one immediate starter: Williams, who coaches hope will anchor their line for years to come. He's versatile and quick and looks to be a good fit for Shanahan's zone blocking scheme. As for the rest, Washington should have special teams contributors in Riley, Morris and Austin, while Cook and Capers will fight for a spot on the depth chart.

Layne Murdoch

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Bartel, Richard	QB	6-3	230	1	Tarleton State	FA-09	Fa-Dal-07
15 Brennan, Colt	QB	6-3	212	2	Hawaii	D6-08	D6-Was-08
8 Grossman, Rex	QB	6-1	217	7	Florida	FA-Hou-10	D1-Chi-03
5 McNabb, Donovan	QB	6-2	240	11	Syracuse	T-Phi-10	D1-Phi-99
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
39 Aldridge, Anthony	RB	5-9	175	2	Houston	FA-09	FA-Den-08
27 Johnson, Larry	RB	6-1	230	7	Penn State	FA-Cin-10	D1-KC-03
39 Parker, Willie	RB	5-10	209	6	North Carolina	FA-Pit-10	FA-Pit-04
26 Portis, Clinton	RB	5-11	221	8	Miami	T-Den-04	D2-Den-02
45 Sellers, Mike	FB	6-3	273	10	Walla Walla CC	FA-04	FA-Was-98
46 Torain, Ryan	RB	6-1	225	1	Arizona State	FA-10	D5-Den-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
13 Armstrong, Anthony	WR	5-11	183	1	West Texas A&M	FA-09	FA-Mia-08
47 Cooley, Chris	TE	6-3	250	6	Utah State	D3-04	D3-Was-04
86 Davis, Fred	TE	6-4	257	2	USC	D2-08	D2-Was-08
84 Galloway, Joey	WR	5-11	197	15	Ohio State	FA-Pit-10	D1-Sea-95
83 Hagans, Marques	WR	5-10	205	2	Virginia	FA-10	D5-StL-06
12 Kelly, Malcolm	WR	6-4	227	2	Oklahoma	D2-08	D2-Was-08
84 Mitchell, Marko	WR	6-4	218	1	Nevada	D7-09	D7-Was-09
89 Moss, Santana	WR	5-10	200	9	Miami	T-NYJ-05	D1-NYJ-01
85 Ryan, Sean	TE	6-5	260	6	Boston College	FA-KC-10	D5-Dal-04
11 Thomas, Devin	WR	6-2	215	2	Michigan State	D2-08	D2-Was-08
19 Wade, Bobby	WR	5-10	186	7	Arizona	FA-KC-10	D5-Chi-03
87 Williams, Roydell	WR	6-0	187	3	Tulane	FA-10	D4-Ten-05
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
66 Dockery, Derrick	G	6-6	326	7	Texas	FA-09	D3-Was-03
69 Fanaika, Paul	G	6-5	327	1	Arizona State	FA-09	D7-Phi-09
75 Hicks, Artis	G/T	6-4	335	8	Memphis	FA-Min-10	FA-Phi-02
74 Heyer, Stephon	T	6-6	330	3	Maryland	FA-07	FA-Was-07
76 Jones, Levi	T	6-5	307	7	Arizona State	FA-09	D1-Cin-02
63 Montgomery, Will	C/G	6-3	305	3	Virginia Tech	FA-08	D7-Car-06
68 Oldenburg, Clint	T	6-5	302	2	Colorado State	FA-09	D5-NE-07
61 Rabach, Casey	C	6-4	295	9	Wisconsin	FA-Bal-05	D3-Bal-01
77 Rinehart, Chad	G	6-5	310	2	Northern Iowa	D3-08	D3-Was-08
73 Robinson, William	T	6-5	297	1	San Diego State	FA-09	FA-Sea-08
50 Williams, Edwin	C/G	6-3	315	1	Maryland	FA-09	FA-Was-09
71 Williams, Mike	G/T	6-7	337	6	Texas	FA-09	D1-Buf-02
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
76 Bryant, Anthony	DT	6-3	337	3	Alabama	FA-NYG-10	D6-TB-05
94 Carriker, Adam	DL	6-6	308	3	Nebraska	T-StL-10	D1-StL-07
93 Daniels, Phillip	DE	6-6	305	14	Georgia	FA-Chi-04	D4-Sea-96
64 Golston, Kedric	DL	6-4	300	4	Georgia	D6-06	D6-Was-06
72 Green, Howard	DL	6-2	320	5	LSU	FA-NYJ-10	D6-Hou-02
92 Haynesworth, Albert	DT	6-6	350	8	Tennessee	FA-Ten-09	D1-Ten-02
62 Holmes, Antoine	DL	6-2	289	1	NC State	FA-09	FA-Min-09
91 Jackson, Rob	DE	6-4	269	2	Kansas State	D7-08	D7-Was-08
96 Kemoeatu, Maake	DT	6-5	345	8	Utah	FA-Car-06	FA-Bal-02
79 Peterson, Greg	DT	6-5	315	3	NC Central	FA-Jac-10	D5-TB-07
75 Scott, Darrion	DE	6-3	289	4	Ohio State	FA-10	D3-Min-04
97 Wynn, Renaldo	DE	6-3	280	13	Notre Dame	FA-09	D1-Jac-97
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
79 Alexander, Lorenzo	LB	6-1	297	3	California	FA-07	FA-Car-05
54 Blades, H.B.	LB	5-10	242	3	Pittsburgh	D6-07	D6-Was-07
55 Bowen, Alvin	LB	6-1	222	2	Iowa State	FA-09	D5-Buf-08
99 Carter, Andre	LB	6-4	253	9	California	FA-SF-06	D1-SF-01
Draft, Chris	LB	5-11	234	11	Stanford	FA--Buf-10	D6-Chi-98
59 Fletcher, London	LB	5-10	245	12	John Carroll	FA-Buf-07	FA-StL-98
56 Gatewood, Curtis	LB	6-3	240	2	Vanderbilt	FA-09	FA-Was-08
51 Henson, Robert	LB	6-0	242	1	TCU	D6-09	D6-Was-09
90 Jarmon, Jeremy	LB	6-3	277	1	Kentucky	SD3-09	SD3-Was-09
52 McIntosh, Rocky	LB	6-2	238	4	Miami	D2-06	D2-Was-06
98 Orakpo, Brian	LB	6-4	260	1	Texas	D1-09	D1-Was-09
95 Wilson, Chris	LB	6-4	247	3	Northwood	FA-07	FA-Was-07
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
25 Barnes, Kevin	CB	6-1	188	1	Maryland	D3-09	D3-Was-09
31 Buchanon, Phillip	CB	5-11	186	8	Miami	FA-Det-10	D1-Oak-02
37 Doughty, Reed	S	6-1	205	4	Northern Colorado	D6-06	D6-Was-06
24 Dutch, Doug	CB	5-11	199	1	Michigan	FA-09	FA-Was-09
23 Hall, DeAngelo	CB	5-10	195	6	Virginia Tech	FA-08	D1-Atl-04
29 Holmes, Lendy	S	6-1	201	1	Oklahoma	FA-09	FA-Was-09
48 Horton, Chris	S	6-1	211	2	UCLA	D7-08	D7-Was-08
30 Landry, LaRon	S	6-0	210	3	Louisiana State	D1-07	D1-Was-07
41 Moore, Kareem	S	5-11	218	2	Nicholls State	D6-08	D6-Was-08
22 Rogers, Carlos	CB	6-0	190	5	Auburn	D1-05	D1-Was-05
20 Tryon, Justin	CB	5-9	183	2	Arizona State	D4-08	D4-Was-08
34 Westbrook, Byron	CB	5-10	198	1	Salisbury	FA-07	FA-Was-07
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
3 Bidwell, Josh	P	6-3	220	10	Oregon	FA-TB-10	D4-GB-99
4 Gano, Graham	K	6-2	200	1	Florida State	FA-09	FA-Bal-09

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	89	Santana Moss
	84	Marko Mitchell
WR	11	Devin Thomas
	12	Malcolm Kelly
LT		Trent Williams (R)
	74	Stephon Heyer
LG	66	Derrick Dockery
	77	Chad Rinehart
C	61	Casey Rabach
	63	Will Montgomery
RG	71	Mike Williams
	77	Chad Rinehart
RT	75	Artis Hicks
	74	Stephon Heyer
TE	47	Chris Cooley
	86	Fred Davis
QB	5	Donovan McNabb
	8	Rex Grossman
FB	45	Mike Sellers
	86	Fred Davis
RB	26	Clinton Portis
	27	Larry Johnson

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	93	Phillip Daniels
	64	Kedric Golston
NT	92	Albert Haynesworth
	96	Maake Kemoeatu
DE	94	Adam Carriker
	64	Kedric Golston
OLB	98	Brian Orakpo
	97	Lorenzo Alexander
ILB	52	Rocky McIntosh
	95	Chris Wilson
ILB	59	London Fletcher
	54	H.B. Blades
OLB	99	Andre Carter
		Chris Draft
CB	23	DeAngelo Hall
	31	Phillip Buchanon
CB	22	Carlos Rogers
	20	Justin Tryon
SS	30	LaRon Landry
	48	Chris Horton
FS	48	Chris Horton
	37	Reed Doughty

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Graham Gano
KR	11	Devin Thomas
P	3	Josh Bidwell
PR	31	Phillip Buchanon

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Executive Vice President/Head Coach: Mike Shanahan
Offensive Coordinator: Kyle Shanahan
Defensive Coordinator: Jim Haslett
Special Teams Coordinator: Danny Smith
Special Teams Assistant: Richard Hightower
Quarterbacks: Matt LaFleur
Asst. Head Coach/Running Backs: Bobby Turner
Offensive Line: Chris Foerster
Wide Receivers: Keenan McCardell
Tight Ends: Jon Embree
Offensive Assistant: Sean McVay
Defensive Line: Jacob Burney
Linebackers: Lou Spanos
Defensive Backs: Bob Slowik
Safeties: Steve Jackson
Defensive Assistant: Kirk Olivadotti
Head Strength and Conditioning: Ray Wright

FANTASY FLASH

After taking over for Chris Cooley, who broke his leg in Week 7, tight end **Fred Davis** stepped in and averaged 4.1 catches per game while hauling in six scores over the final 10 weeks of the season. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(4–12)*

Sept. 13	at N.Y. Giants	L	17–23
Sept. 20	St. Louis	W	9– 7
Sept. 27	at Detroit	L	14–19
Oct. 4	Tampa Bay	W	16–13
Oct. 11	at Carolina	L	17–20
Oct. 18	Kansas City	L	6–14
Oct. 26	Philadelphia	L	17–27
Nov. 8	at Atlanta	L	17–31
Nov. 15	Denver	W	27–17
Nov. 22	at Dallas	L	6– 7
Nov. 29	at Philadelphia	L	24–27
Dec. 6	New Orleans (ot)	L	30–33
Dec. 13	at Oakland	W	34–13
Dec. 21	N.Y. Giants	L	12–45
Dec. 27	Dallas	L	0–17
Jan. 3	at San Diego	L	20–23

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Dallas	8:20 pm
Sept. 19	Houston	4:15 pm
Sept. 26	at St. Louis	4:05 pm
Oct. 3	at Philadelphia	4:15 pm
Oct. 10	Green Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	Indianapolis	8:20 pm
Oct. 24	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 15	Philadelphia (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Nov. 21	at Tennessee	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	Minnesota	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Dallas	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Jacksonville	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm

Athlon Sports

chicago BEARS

3 NFC NORTH FORECAST

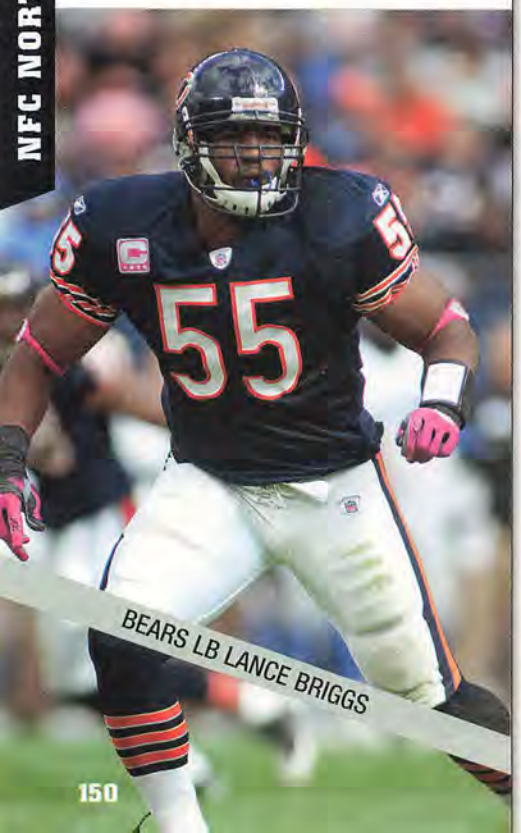
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Virginia Halas McCaskey
PRESIDENT: Ted Phillips
GENERAL MANAGER: Jerry Angelo
STADIUM: Soldier Field (61,500)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.chicagobears.com
TICKETS: 847-615-2327
TRAINING CAMP: Olivet Nazarene University (Bourbonnais, Ill.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	11	PLAYOFFS
2006	13	Conference Champion
2007	7	
2008	9	
2009	7	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs Conference Champion


BEARS LB LANCE BRIGGS

The Bears have finished out of the playoffs for three straight seasons, and if it happens again, heads will roll. Since losing to the Colts in Super Bowl XLI, the Bears have gone 23–25. While there have been no ultimatums, it is assumed that another non-playoff season will be the last for coach Lovie Smith and his staff, and the purge could reach all the way to general manager Jerry Angelo.

The Bears made the biggest free agency splash in franchise history, going on an unprecedented one-day shopping spree that netted defensive end Julius Peppers, running back Chester Taylor and tight end Brandon Manumaleuna to contracts that could be worth as much as $119 million, including a potential $91.5 million deal for Peppers, easily the biggest prize of this year's free agent class.

COACHES Smith took over the defensive playcalling duties from Bob Babich last season, but there was no improvement. After searching outside the organization for a defensive coordinator, Smith decided to promote defensive line coach Rod Marinelli. Marinelli will still work closely with the line, which is his specialty, and his No. 1 priority will be improving a pass rush that has languished for three years. More pressure will help the Cover 2 defense that Smith is partial to and that the Bears will continue to run. New offensive coordinator Mike Martz is a passing-game wizard whose apparent indifference to the running game doesn't seem to fit with Smith's desire to be a running team. Smith and Martz worked together in St. Louis; Martz was the head coach and Smith was the defensive coordinator. Now, Smith is the boss, and there seems to be great potential here for a clash of philosophies. **GRADE: C**

QUARTERBACKS If he can accept the often harsh coaching of Martz, Jay Cutler could flourish in an offense that was a disappointment last year. No one was more of a disappointment than Cutler, the supposed franchise quarterback, who flung an NFL-worst 26 interceptions. But he remains a Pro Bowl talent because of his rocket arm, accuracy and knack for moving in the pocket and buying time. There isn't a pass route in anyone's playbook that Cutler can't throw with authority. But he has yet to prove himself as a leader or a winner. Cutler has not led a team to a winning season in the NFL or in college. He is still seen as aloof and has a reputation as a finger-pointer. But he might have grown up some last season. Although there were many opportunities to blame an inexperienced group of wide receivers and a mediocre line, Cutler did not throw anyone under the bus. It will be interesting to see how he works with Martz, who has orchestrated some of the most productive NFL offenses in recent years, but his tough coaching could alienate Cutler, and it remains to be seen if the Bears' quarterbacks room is big enough to house two massive egos. Backup Caleb Hanie, entering his third year out of Colorado State, has impressed with his athleticism and ability to make plays on the run, but most of that has been demonstrated in the preseason. **GRADE: B-**

RUNNING BACKS Taylor was brought in to complement and compete with Matt Forté, whose production plummeted last season after an encouraging rookie campaign. Forté seemed a step slower than he was in 2008, but he didn't get much help from his blockers. He still caught 57 passes for 471 yards, but he needed 258 carries to gain 929 yards (3.6-yard average). Taylor is 30 but has low miles because he has been the feature back in only one of his eight NFL seasons. Like Forté, Taylor is a versatile back, combining inside and outside running skills with good hands and blocking ability. Kahlil Bell was activated off the practice squad after 10 weeks last season and impressed in limited duty as a rookie. He rushed for 220 yards on 40 carries for a healthy 5.5-yard average. Bell could move past Garrett Wolfe, who has struggled to find a niche, as the team's No. 3 runner. **GRADE: C+**

RECEIVERS The Bears resisted the temptation to bring in a veteran wide receiver last year, instead letting their young players get valuable playing time. That approach seemed to work. Devin Hester caught 57 passes for a team-best 757 yards; Earl Bennett caught 54 passes for 717 yards; Johnny Knox caught 45 for 527; and Devin Aromashodu emerged late in the season. The arrow is still pointing up on all four players. Hester might never become a No. 1 receiver in the NFL, but his speed and elusiveness will always make him a big-play weapon. Bennett, who played with Cutler for one season at Vanderbilt, was vastly improved in his second season. His 54 catches were 54 more than his rookie season. Knox combines excellent speed with soft hands. The second-year player still has much to learn about route-running, but he answered questions about his ability to take a hit. Aromashodu is one of the Bears' tallest receivers at 6'2", and Cutler has made it known that he values a big target who can stretch the field. Manumaleuna is the big, blocking tight end Martz wanted. Greg Olsen is the tight end the Bears drafted in the

Briggs, Cutler: Peter Brouillet

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Cutler's Toughness Impresses "The quarterback of the Chicago Bears should be a tough guy, and that's what I saw (of Jay Cutler on film)," coach Lovie Smith says. "I saw his toughness in how he handled things and his toughness on the football field, too. It's OK to slide once in awhile (to avoid contact), but that's not his mentality."

Knowing Your Role New tight end Brandon Manumaleuna, a 6'2", 295-pound extra lineman, played five years for Mike Martz with the Rams, so he was asked if his position gets ignored in Martz's offense. After a long pause, he said, "Sometimes." But he smiled when he said it.

Gimme a Break Despite 81 sacks in eight seasons and five pro Bowls, defensive end Julius Peppers has a reputation for taking plays off, which he disputes — kind of. "It's not only me," he says. "I'm not the only one who's doing it, but I'm the only one who people are saying it about. Sometimes when you're on the field, you get tired. If I'm not playing as hard on play 66 as I was on play No. 1, then come on."

2009 STATS

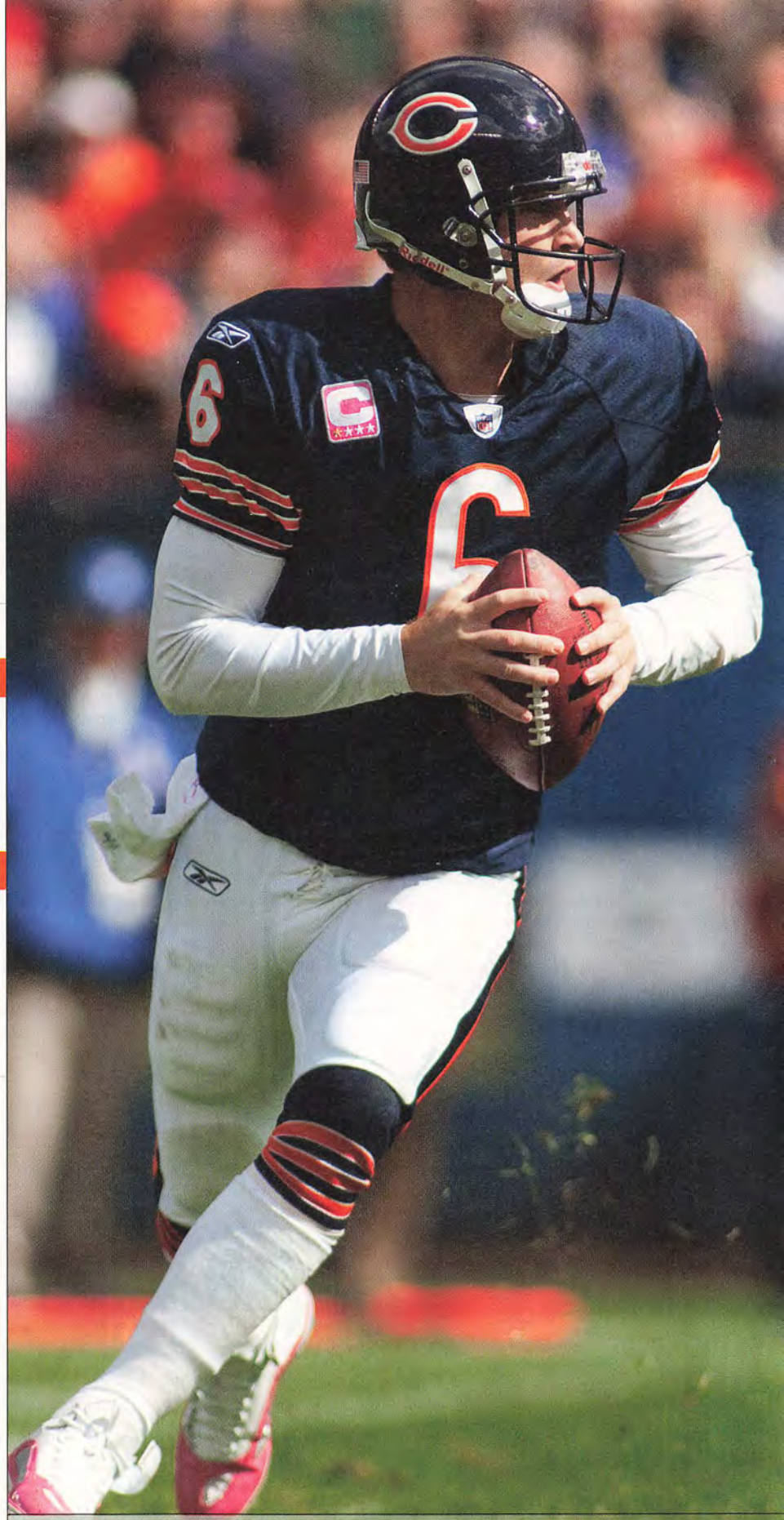
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	310.3	23	12
Rushing	93.2	29	16
Passing	217.1	17	11
Scoring	20.4	19	10
Punt Returns	8.5	15	8
Kick Returns	25.0	3	2
Red Zone TD %	47.1	27	14

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	337.8	17	9
Rushing	126.4	23	13
Passing	211.4	13	5
Scoring	23.4	T21	11
Interceptions	13	T22	T9
Sacks	35	T13	T8
Turnover Differential	-6	23	10

SCOUTING THE BEARS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP CHICAGO

"The Bears are going to be an interesting team to watch, just to see how all those personalities mesh. Mike Martz obviously does things his way, and now he's back with Lovie Smith and Rod Marinelli. Throw in Mike Tice, too. That's a lot of cooks. … Martz will make Jay Cutler a better quarterback, no doubt. The question is whether that offensive line will get him killed first. … They obviously didn't do much in the draft, but Julius Peppers makes a big difference. He is one of the top pass-rushers when he wants to be. … Their offensive line, you'd have to say, is average at best. It's a hard position to get better at, I understand that. But they really did nothing to address it. … I think you have to wonder about Brian Urlacher's durability issues, Charles Tillman's durability issues. Defensively, I think they're very average. … I think they've helped themselves at running back. Both those guys, neither one is a home-run hitter, but they're both strong, good inside runners, and Matt Forté has excellent hands out of the backfield."



BEARS QB JAY CUTLER

first round in 2007 with the idea of making him one of the centerpieces of the offense. But the tight end has not traditionally been a staple of Martz's passing offense, so it remains to be seen if Olsen's role as a pass-catcher diminishes. **GRADE: C**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Chris Williams, a first-round pick out of Vanderbilt in 2008, is now entrenched at left tackle, Olin Kreutz is back for his 13th year at center and right guard Roberto Garza is back for his fifth straight year of playing next to Kreutz. Garza is a blue-collar journeyman who works well next to Kreutz, the six-time Pro Bowler whose play was adversely affected last year by an injured Achilles' tendon that required offseason surgery. Frank Omiyale started the '09 season at left guard, was benched for four games, came back and showed improvement. But he has been switched to right tackle, which is where he has the most experience and should be a better fit. That leaves the left guard spot open. Josh Beekman has started 20 games there but lacks some size and ability to anchor. Experienced Kevin Shaffer filled in at right tackle last season but is no longer considered a quality starter. James Marten adds depth at right tackle. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Peppers is expected to make everyone on the defense better. He has 81 sacks in eight seasons, including 25 in the past two, giving the team an immediate upgrade in a deficient area. It remains to be seen whether the Bears will use Peppers exclusively at one end spot or move him back and forth to exploit matchups. But the departure of last year's starting ends, Alex Brown (cut) and Adewale Ogunleye (free agency), leave some holes to fill. Occasional pass-rush pressure comes from Mark Anderson, who will probably share with Israel Idonije whichever end position Peppers doesn't claim. Anderson has not been a consistent threat since getting 12 sacks as a rookie in 2006, and Idonije has been a solid backup but never a full-time starter. Marcus Harrison is expected to push for the starting job at nosetackle, next to 3 technique tackle Tommie Harris. But Harrison will have to play much better than he did last year to take the job from Anthony Adams, whom the Bears try every year to replace, but who ultimately plays better than his challengers. The Bears will continue to hope for a return to Pro Bowl form from Harris, but they've been waiting for about three years now. **GRADE: B**

LINEBACKERS This was the deepest position on the club last season, and that depth was put to the test when opening-day starters Brian Urlacher (dislocated wrist) and Pisa Tinoisamoa (knee) combined to play approximately one full game all season between them. Nick Roach, on the strong side in place of Tinoisamoa, and Hunter Hillenmeyer, in the middle for Urlacher, stepped in and performed well, but the Bears still missed Urlacher's leadership and big-play ability. The Bears are counting on his return to form. Tinoisamoa will have to win the job back from Roach, who tied for the team lead with 10 tackles for a loss. On the weak side, Lance Briggs has been voted to four straight Pro Bowls and stepped up as a leader in Urlacher's absence. He shows great range against the run and can rush the passer and drop into coverage when necessary. **GRADE: A**

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Bears have endured 40 lineup changes at the safety positions since Smith became head coach in 2004, and they are eager to achieve some continuity there. The post-draft trade for Carolina's Chris Harris probably means he'll be the starting strong safety. Al Afalava started 13 games last season as a rookie, including 10 at strong safety, but he'll have to win the job again this time around. Afalava is a physical player but somewhat lacking in coverage. Danieal Manning started 10 games at free safety last year and has 40 starts since moving into the lineup as a rookie in 2006, but his performance has not matched his excellent physical tools. Third-round pick Major Wright will compete at free safety, but he'll have to climb over such veterans as Manning, Josh Bullocks and Craig Steltz. The corners are set with Charles Tillman and Zackary Bowman, who are big, physical hitters who will help in run support and have the size to match up with bigger receivers. Depth isn't great, but Corey Graham and undersized Tim Jennings both have starting experience. **GRADE: B-**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Chris Harris	SS	Carolina	Alex Brown	DE	New Orleans
Tim Jennings	CB	Indianapolis	Adewale Ogunleye	DE	Free agent
Brandon Manumaleuna	TE	San Diego	Orlando Pace	OT	Free agent
Julius Peppers	DE	Carolina	Nathan Vasher	CB	San Diego
Chester Taylor	RB	Minnesota			

Peppers is the consistent pass-rush, double-digit-sack threat the Bears have lacked for almost a decade. He's still a dominant player at 30, but he'll be essentially replacing two departed ends, Brown and Ogunleye, who were starters for five of the past six seasons. Manumaleuna is the "extra offensive lineman" type of tight end that new offensive coordinator Mike Martz needs in his system. Taylor could complement Matt Forté or replace him, if Forté's sophomore slump continues. Harris will likely start at strong safety. Pace's one year in Chicago showed he was at the end of the line. Vasher had already been phased out.

SPECIALISTS Robbie Gould is the third-most accurate field goal kicker in NFL history with an 85.9 percent success rate. Punter Brad Maynard remains one of the league's best directional kickers. The Bears are so deep in return men, and so well coached by coordinator Dave Toub, that they can afford to use Hester just on punt returns. Manning led the NFL in kickoff returns in 2008 with a 29.7-yard average. Last year, Knox was third in the league at 29.0. **GRADE: A**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Bears are a better team than last year, but they might not be good enough to get to the postseason from a division that also includes the Vikings and Packers.

Larry Smith

CHICAGO IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
3. Major Wright	FS	5-11	206	Florida
4. Corey Wootton	DE	6-6	270	Northwestern
5. Josh Moore	CB	5-11	188	Kansas State
6. Dan LeFevour	QB	6-3	230	C. Michigan
7. J'Marcus Webb	OT	6-8	328	W. Texas A&M

Wright could compete for the starting job at a position that has had extensive turnover the past few years. Wootton, considered a top-50 pick after a 10-sack junior season at Northwestern, slid down draft boards because he played last season just seven months after major knee surgery. Moore is a good man-to-man cover corner but isn't big or physical. The Bears couldn't pass on LeFevour when he fell to the sixth round. He was highly productive at Central Michigan. Webb has impressive physical characteristics but will need to be pushed.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Basanez, Brett	QB	6-1	208	2	Northwestern	FA-Car-09	FA-Car-06
6 Cutler, Jay	QB	6-3	233	4	Vanderbilt	T-Den-09	D1-Den-06
12 Hanie, Caleb	QB	6-2	225	2	Colorado State	FA-08	FA-Chi-08
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32 Bell, Kahlil	RB	5-11	212	1	UCLA	FA-09	FA-Min-09
22 Forté, Matt	RB	6-2	218	2	Tulane	D2-08	D2-Chi-08
45 Ta'ufo'ou, Will	FB	5-11	247	1	California	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
29 Taylor, Chester	RB	5-11	213	8	Toledo	FA-Min-10	D6-Bal-02
43 Williams, Eddie	FB	6-1	249	1	Idaho	FA-Was-10	D7-Was-09
25 Wolfe, Garrett	RB	5-7	185	3	Northern Illinois	D3a-07	D3a-Chi-07
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
19 Aromashodu, Devin	WR	6-2	201	3	Auburn	PS-Was-08	D7-Mia-06
80 Bennett, Earl	WR	6-0	204	2	Vanderbilt	D3a-08	D3a-Chi-08
85 Brock, Kevin	TE	6-5	255	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-Car-09
88 Clark, Desmond	TE	6-3	249	11	Wake Forest	FA-Mia-03	D6-Den-99
87 Davis, Kellen	TE	6-7	262	2	Michigan State	D5b-08	D5b-Chi-08
81 Davis, Rashied	WR	5-9	187	5	San Jose State	FA-05	FA-Chi-05
23 Hester, Devin	WR	5-11	190	4	Miami	D2b-06	D2b-Chi-06
17 Iglesias, Juaquin	WR	6-1	205	1	Oklahoma	D3b-09	D3b-Chi-09
13 Knox, Johnny	WR	6-0	185	1	Abilene Christian	D5a-09	D5a-Chi-09
86 Manumaleuna, Brandon	TE	6-2	295	9	Arizona	FA-SD-10	D4-StL-01
82 Olsen, Greg	TE	6-5	255	3	Miami	D1-07	D1-Chi-07
11 Peterman, Eric	WR	6-1	202	1	Northwestern	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
62 Asiata, Johan	G	6-4	300	1	UNLV	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
67 Beekman, Josh	G/C	6-2	310	3	Boston College	D4-07	D4-Chi-07
63 Garza, Roberto	G/C	6-2	310	9	Texas A&M-Kings.	FA-Atl-05	D4-Atl-01
57 Kreutz, Olin	C	6-2	292	12	Washington	D3-98	D3-Chi-98
60 Louis, Lance	G	6-3	305	1	San Diego State	D7a-09	D7a-Chi-09
72 Marten, James	T	6-8	310	3	Boston College	FA-Oak-09	D3-Dal-07
68 Omiyale, Frank	G/T	6-4	315	5	Tennessee Tech	FA-Car-09	D5-Atl-05
73 Raiola, Donovan	C	6-2	293	1	Wisconsin	FA-Ari-09	FA-Pit-07
78 Shaffer, Kevin	T	6-5	318	8	Tulsa	FA-Cle-09	D7-Atl-02
74 Williams, Chris	T	6-6	315	2	Vanderbilt	D1-08	D1-Chi-08
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
95 Adams, Anthony	DT	6-0	310	7	Penn State	FA-SF-07	D2-SF-03
97 Anderson, Mark	DE	6-4	255	4	Alabama	D5-06	D5-Chi-06
90 Gilbert, Jarron	DT	6-5	285	1	San Jose State	D3a-09	D3a-Chi-09
91 Harris, Tommie	DT	6-3	295	6	Oklahoma	D1-04	D1-Chi-04
94 Harrison, Marcus	DT	6-3	312	2	Arkansas	D3b-08	D3b-Chi-08
71 Idonije, Israel	DE	6-6	270	6	Manitoba	FA-Cle-03	FA-Cle-03
69 Melton, Henry	DE	6-3	260	1	Texas	D4a-09	D4a-Chi-09
90 Peppers, Julius	DE	6-7	283	8	North Carolina	FA-Car-10	D1-Car-02
75 Toeaina, Matt	DT	6-2	308	2	Oregon	PS-Cin-07	D6-Cin-07
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
55 Briggs, Lance	LB	6-1	242	7	Arizona	D3-03	D3-Chi-03
92 Hillenmeyer, Hunter	LB	6-4	238	7	Vanderbilt	FA-03	D5-GB-03
64 Malast, Kevin	LB	6-1	233	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
53 Roach, Nick	LB	6-1	234	3	Northwestern	PS-SD-07	FA-SD-07
58 Shaw, Tim	LB	6-1	236	3	Penn State	FA-Jac-09	D5-Car-07
49 Tinoisamoa, Pisa	LB	6-1	230	7	Hawaii	FA-StL-09	D2-StL-03
54 Urlacher, Brian	LB	6-4	258	10	New Mexico	D1-00	D1-Chi-00
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
24 Afalava, Al	S	5-11	212	1	Oregon State	D6-09	D6-Chi-09
35 Bowman, Zackary	CB	6-1	193	2	Nebraska	D5a-08	D5a-Chi-08
36 Bullocks, Josh	S	6-0	207	5	Nebraska	FA-NO-09	D2-NO-05
21 Graham, Corey	CB	6-0	198	3	New Hampshire	D5b-07	D5b-Chi-07
46 Harris, Chris	S	6-0	205	5	UL Monroe	T-Car-10	D6-Chi-05
26 Jennings, Tim	CB	5-8	185	4	Georgia	FA-Ind-10	D2-Ind-06
38 Manning, Danieal	S	5-11	202	4	Abilene Christian	D2a-06	D2a-Chi-06
30 Moore, D.J.	CB	5-9	183	1	Vanderbilt	D4b-09	D4b-Chi-09
20 Steltz, Craig	S	6-1	210	2	LSU	D4-08	D4-Chi-08
33 Tillman, Charles	CB	6-1	198	7	UL Lafayette	D2-03	D2-Chi-03
47 Turenne, Woodny	CB	6-0	184	1	Louisville	FA-09	FA-Chi-09
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Gould, Robbie	K	6-0	185	5	Penn State	FA-05	FA-NE-05
65 Mannelly, Patrick	LS	6-5	265	12	Duke	D6b-98	D6b-Chi-98
4 Maynard, Brad	P	6-1	188	13	Ball State	FA-NYG-01	D3-NYG-97
10 McGee, Richmond	P	6-4	203	1	Texas	FA-09	FA-Phi-08

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	80	Earl Bennett
	13	Johnny Knox
WR	23	Devin Hester
	19	Devin Aromashodu
LT	74	Chris Williams
	72	James Marten
LG	67	Josh Beekman
	60	Lance Louis
C	57	Olin Kreutz
	67	Josh Beekman
RG	63	Roberto Garza
	60	Lance Louis
RT	68	Frank Omiyale
	78	Kevin Shaffer
TE	82	Greg Olsen
	88	Desmond Clark
TE	86	Brandon Manumaleuna
	87	Kellen Davis
QB	6	Jay Cutler
	12	Caleb Hanie
RB	22	Matt Forté
	29	Chester Taylor

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	97	Mark Anderson
	71	Israel Idonije
DT	91	Tommie Harris
	70	Jarron Gilbert
NT	95	Anthony Adams
	94	Marcus Harrison
DE	90	Julius Peppers
	69	Henry Melton
WLB	55	Lance Briggs
	49	Pisa Tinoisamoa
MLB	54	Brian Urlacher
	92	Hunter Hillenmeyer
SLB	53	Nick Roach
	49	Pisa Tinoisamoa
CB	33	Charles Tillman
	21	Corey Graham
CB	35	Zackary Bowman
	26	Tim Jennings
SS	46	Chris Harris
	24	Al Afalava
FS	38	Danieal Manning
		Major Wright (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Robbie Gould
KR	38	Danieal Manning
P	4	Brad Maynard
PR	23	Devin Hester

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Lovie Smith
Offensive Coordinator: Mike Martz
Asst. Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator: Rod Marinelli
Special Teams: Dave Toub
Assistant Special Teams: Chris Tabor
Quarterbacks: Shane Day
Running Backs: Tim Spencer
Wide Receivers: Darryl Drake
Tight Ends: Mike DeBord
Offensive Line: Mike Tice
Offensive Quality Control: Andrew Hayes-Stoker
Defensive Line: Eric Washington
Linebackers: Bob Babich
Defensive Backs: Jon Hoke
Asst. Defensive Backs: Gill Byrd
Defensive Quality Control: Mikal Smith
Strength and Conditioning: Jim Arthur

FANTASY FLASH

Matt Forté led all running backs in receptions in 2008 with 63, and his 57 catches in 2009 ranked third among running backs behind Ray Rice (78) and Tim Hightower (63). *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(7–9)*

Sept. 13	at Green Bay	L	15–21
Sept. 20	Pittsburgh	W	17–14
Sept. 27	at Seattle	W	25–19
Oct. 4	Detroit	W	48–24
Oct. 18	at Atlanta	L	14–21
Oct. 25	at Cincinnati	L	10–45
Nov. 1	Cleveland	W	30– 6
Nov. 8	Arizona	L	21–41
Nov. 12	at San Francisco	L	6–10
Nov. 22	Philadelphia	L	20–24
Nov. 29	at Minnesota	L	10–36
Dec. 6	St. Louis	W	17– 9
Dec. 13	Green Bay	L	14–21
Dec. 20	at Baltimore	L	7–31
Dec. 28	Minnesota (ot)	W	36–30
Jan. 3	at Detroit	W	37–23

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Detroit	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Dallas	1:00 pm
Sept. 27	Green Bay (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 3	at N.Y. Giants	8:20 pm
Oct. 10	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	Seattle	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Washington	1:00 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	Minnesota	1:00 pm
Nov. 18	at Miami (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Nov. 28	Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	New England	1:00 pm
Dec. 20	at Minnesota (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 26	N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at Green Bay	1:00 pm

detroit LIONS

4 NFC NORTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER/CHAIRMAN: William Clay Ford
PRESIDENT: Tom Lewand
GENERAL MANAGER: Martin Mayhew
STADIUM: Ford Field (65,000)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.detroitlions.com
TICKETS: 313-262-2003
TRAINING CAMP: Lions Training Facility (Allen Park, Mich.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	5
2006	3
2007	7
2008	0
2009	2

LIONS WR CALVIN JOHNSON

Players are supposed to make their biggest strides from Year 1 to Year 2. The Lions are hoping that's true of an entire organization as well. In 2009, new general manager Martin Mayhew and rookie coach Jim Schwartz took a chainsaw to the wreckage left behind from the 0–16 debacle, jettisoning half the roster, drafting their franchise quarterback and beginning to lay the foundation.

The rebuilding continued with another flurry of offseason activity in which another cornerstone piece — maybe two — arrived via the draft. You can say this about Mayhew: He's not one to sit still.

Of course, for a team that's a decade removed from its last winning season (9–7 in 2000), expectations come with a healthy dose of speculation. And growth could be stunted by one of the NFL's toughest divisions, the NFC North. But for a welcome change, there appears to be a plan in place — and a solid one at that.

COACHES Schwartz prides himself on preparation, but even he wasn't prepared for some of what he saw in a 2–14 season. Still, Schwartz started implementing his philosophy, which places an emphasis on "multidimensional" players. And for the first time since the late 1990s, there's continuity on the sideline; the Lions return both their offensive and defensive coordinators. Scott Linehan already has built a strong relationship with quarterback Matthew Stafford, whose rookie season was derailed by injuries. Linehan should have more chances to show his creativity as a playcaller with several new weapons on offense. Coordinator Gunther Cunningham plans to come out of the coaches box on game days to work with his revamped defense. The irascible 64-year-old was at his wit's end coaching a league-worst unit in 2009. Cunningham loves to blitz with an array of packages, but with an improved pass rush, it will be less out of necessity this season. ***GRADE: C***

QUARTERBACKS It's probably not fair to boil down Stafford's rookie season into one highlight. But it works. Stafford's miracle finish in a last-second win over Cleveland cemented his status as the Lions' could-be savior. That he did it with a separated shoulder — and wearing a microphone for NFL Films, as luck would have it — only added to the drama. That game won over a fan base that hasn't cheered a Pro Bowl quarterback since 1971. Stafford, 22, won the starting job with his savvy, smarts and quick-trigger arm. But a dislocated kneecap in Week 4 hampered him all season, and the shoulder injury finally shelved him after 10 starts. He showed flashes of his talent, though, and his leadership was evident. Stafford should make huge strides if he can cut down on his mistakes (20 interceptions in '09) and stay healthy. The backup role likely falls to Shaun Hill, a part-time starter the last three years in San Francisco. Hill began his career under Linehan in Minnesota and provides a more game-ready replacement than fourth-year backup Drew Stanton. In 16 games as a starter, Hill has a 10–6 record, and he has 23 touchdowns and only 11 interceptions in his career. ***GRADE: C+***

RUNNING BACKS One of the Lions' primary goals this offseason was to add a big-play element in the backfield. They accomplished that by drafting Cal's speedy Jahvid Best, trading back into the first round to snare him 30th overall. The Lions had only five rushes for 20 yards or more last season (second-worst in the NFL), and two of those were by quarterbacks. Best, who runs a 4.35 40, is a threat to go the distance every time he touches the ball. Kevin Smith averaged just 3.4 yards per carry in his second season as a starter, but he played through painful shoulder injuries and then tore his ACL in Week 14. How quickly he'll be ready to play again isn't clear, but with Best in the fold, Smith's skill set (41 catches in '09) could make him an ideal third down back. Maurice Morris might return as a veteran backup, but last year's rookie change-of-pace back, Aaron Brown from TCU, could have a hard time making the roster. ***GRADE: C-***

RECEIVERS Linehan began talking last December about the need to find "an eraser" to take some of the attention away from No. 1 wideout Calvin Johnson, who was slowed by injuries but still managed 984 receiving yards last season. The hope is that Nate Burleson, who signed a five-year, $25 million deal on the first day of free agency, will do just that. Burleson will line up opposite Johnson and in the slot to give Stafford another reliable option. Bryant Johnson is another big target, though he was inconsistent last year after signing as a free agent. Dennis Northcutt, who served as the slot receiver, could be the odd man out, provided last year's rookie bust, Derrick Williams, shows signs of improvement this offseason. Detroit traded for tight end Tony Scheffler, who caught 89 passes for Denver in 2007-08, to replace Casey FitzSimmons, who retired due to concussion problems. Scheffler will be used in a lot of two-

Johnson, Stafford: Peter Brouillet

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Special Delivery Jim Schwartz borrowed a page out of Jets coach Rex Ryan's book when he showed up at Kyle Vanden Bosch's house for the midnight start of free agency March 5. Schwartz, who had coached Vanden Bosch in Tennessee, brought stuffed Lions animals for Vanden Bosch's three young kids and an expensive bottle of 2005 Opus One cabernet "that was going to get his wife's attention," Schwartz says.

Suh-per Grade How bad did defensive coordinator Gunther Cunningham want Ndamukong Suh with the No. 2 pick? "Gun's been around the league since they were wearing leather helmets," Schwartz says. "He's graded an awful lot of players. He coached some Hall of Fame defensive linemen. And when we went through our grades in the draft room, Gunther gave Suh the highest grade in our grading system. You can't grade a guy higher."

Keep 'Em Happy Quarterback Matthew Stafford treated offensive linemen Dominic Raiola and Stephen Peterman and backup quarterback Drew Stanton to a three-day junket to the Masters golf tournament in April.

2009 STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	299.0	26	13
Rushing	101.0	24	11
Passing	198.0	21	12
Scoring	16.4	27	14
Punt Returns	8.3	T16	T9
Kick Returns	21.4	T26	13
Red Zone TD %	47.2	26	13

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	392.1	32	16
Rushing	126.6	25	14
Passing	265.6	32	16
Scoring	30.9	32	16
Interceptions	9	30	15
Sacks	26	29	15
Turnover Differential	-18	32	16

SCOUTING THE LIONS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP DETROIT

"I see them taking a step forward. I think they've done some nice things. They've added some good core people. Now they have the stability of a second year with the head coach and second year with the stability of a young quarterback — a quarterback with a lot of ability. Matthew Stafford's a talented guy. If they can keep him on his feet, he's a rugged, tough competitor. I was impressed with him for a first-year quarterback, for a guy who got knocked all over the place. I mean, he got knocked around a lot. … Obviously, Detroit got better in the draft, but it's not hard to get better when you're picking at the top of every round every year. You're either going to get better or you're going to get fired. I'm not sure how they could have messed it up this year, and they didn't. … They've improved on the defensive line. Ndamukong Suh has a chance to be a difference-maker. … They still have areas of need. Offensive line is one, and I think they could look at the linebacker position."

LIONS QB MATTHEW STAFFORD

tight end sets with 2009 first-round pick Brandon Pettigrew and veteran Will Heller. Pettigrew also is recovering from ACL surgery last December, but he should be ready for the regular season. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN A unit that showed signs of improvement last year faded badly as the season dragged on. The revolving door continued at left guard, where neither Daniel Loper nor Manny Ramirez was able to hold down the starting job. The Lions addressed that with a trade for Rob Sims, a three-year starter for Seattle who didn't fit the Seahawks' new zone-blocking scheme. He'll be the 15th different left guard since 2001 to start between mainstays Dominic Raiola and Jeff Backus, a consistent run-blocker who rebounded with a solid year at left tackle in 2009. Stephen Peterman provides punch at right guard, and it showed late last season after he went down with an ankle injury. But right tackle Gosder Cherilus, a 2008 first-round pick, faces a make-or-break year. He, too, was slowed by injuries, but persistent problems with his technique got him benched late last season. Ramirez and Dylan Gandy will fight for backup jobs at guard, while rookie Jason Fox can back up both tackle spots. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN No unit got a bigger makeover this offseason than the defensive line. Schwartz hand-delivered veteran end Kyle Vanden Bosch to Detroit, showing up on his doorstep at the start of free agency. Though Vanden Bosch, a tireless worker and consummate pro, saw his sack totals dip last season, that was partly due to the absence of Albert Haynesworth. In Detroit, he'll line up next to a pair of new tackles in Ndamukong Suh, the No. 2 overall draft pick out of Nebraska, and Corey Williams, acquired from Cleveland in another of Mayhew's trades. Cunningham gave Suh, who is an athletic 6'4", 307 pounds, the highest draft grade he's ever given a player in 30 years in the NFL, and most scouts agree he's a rare specimen. Detroit could use him at two or three different positions up front. Williams returns to a 4-3 scheme like he played in Green Bay, where he had 14 sacks in 2006-07. And Sammie Hill, last year's rookie starter, will stay in the rotation as a stout run defender. Third-year pro Cliff Avril and veteran Jared DeVries should fight for playing time at the end position opposite Vanden Bosch. **GRADE: B-**

LINEBACKERS DeAndre Levy was a rookie surprise as a third-round pick out of Wisconsin, starting 10 games in 2009. Levy, a smart, versatile Cunningham favorite, takes over at middle linebacker, replacing Larry Foote, who returned to Pittsburgh as a free agent. Barring a trade, five-time Pro Bowler Julian Peterson remains as the strong-side linebacker, but the other starting job is up for grabs following the trade of Ernie Sims. Second-year pro Zack Follett, a special teams standout as a rookie, will get a chance to win the job. Jordon Dizon and Landon Johnson, a former starter in Cincinnati, also are competing for playing time. **GRADE: C**

DEFENSIVE BACKS For the second straight year, the Lions cleaned house in the secondary. Last year's starting cornerbacks all are gone. The team traded for Chris Houston, a three-year starter in Atlanta who should be a starter in Detroit as well. His counterpart will either be rookie Amari Spievey, a third-round pick out of Iowa; free agent signee Jonathan Wade, who brings limited starting experience from St. Louis; or Eric King, who was slated for nickelback duty last year before going down with a shoulder injury. At safety, Louis Delmas looks like a star in the making after starting from Day 1 as a rookie in '09. Finding a steady complement next to Delmas was a problem, though. Ko Simpson, who is recovering from knee surgery, is the frontrunner to win the job, but he will compete with Daniel Bullocks, who spent all of last year on injured reserve, and Marquand Manuel, among others. **GRADE: D+**

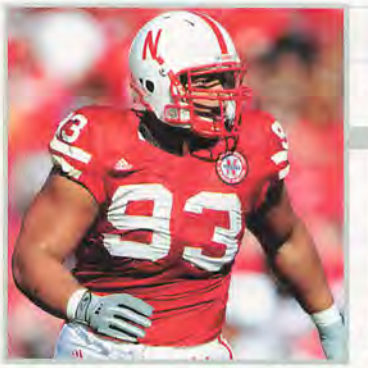
VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Nate Burleson	WR	Seattle	Phillip Buchanon	CB	Washington
Shaun Hill	QB	San Francisco	Casey FitzSimmons	TE	Retired
Chris Houston	CB	Atlanta	Larry Foote	LB	Pittsburgh
Landon Johnson	LB	Carolina	Anthony Henry	CB	Free agent
Tony Scheffler	TE	Denver	Grady Jackson	DT	Free agent
Rob Sims	G	Seattle	Daniel Loper	OL	Free agent
Kyle Vanden Bosch	DE	Tennessee	Kalvin Pearson	S	Free agent
Jonathan Wade	CB	St. Louis	Ernie Sims	LB	Philadelphia
Corey Williams	DT	Cleveland	Dewayne White	DE	Free agent

No GM was more aggressive in the trade market than Martin Mayhew. He dealt late-round draft picks for three likely starters in Houston, Williams and Sims. Coordinator Gunther Cunningham coveted Houston, a terrific athlete whose ball skills need to improve. The coaching staff is convinced Vanden Bosch has plenty left as a pass-rusher, despite what the stats say. Burleson could easily become Matthew Stafford's best friend if he performs as advertised. Trading away Sims brought Scheffler in return (as part of a three-team deal), giving Stafford another big, athletic target.

SPECIALISTS One of the few changes in the coaching staff is the addition of special teams coordinator Danny Crossman, who held the same title in Carolina the last five years. He replaces Stan Kwan, who was fired after a season that saw little spark in the return game and too many miscues from the coverage units. Jason Hanson endured a mid-season funk last season but remains one of the game's most accurate kickers with great range. Punter Nick Harris needs to rebound, too. Burleson should provide a lift on punt returns. Best could get on kick-off returns, though the team might not want to risk an injury to the projected No. 1 running back. **GRADE: C**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Lions now have some blue-chip talent in place, especially at the most important position in Stafford. Now it's time to see if the coaching staff can turn a perennial doormat into a competitive team. The Lions have won two games in two years, but a 6–10 mark in 2010 isn't asking for too much.



Larry Smith

DETROIT IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Ndamukong Suh	DT	6-4	307	Nebraska
1. Jahvid Best	RB	5-10	199	California
3. Amari Spievey	CB	5-11	195	Iowa
4. Jason Fox	OT	6-7	315	Miami (Fla.)
7. Willie Young	DE	6-5	251	NC State
7. Tim Toone	WR	5-10	175	Weber State

Suh was widely viewed as the best player in this class, and the dominant tackle gives the Lions the anchor in the middle they've lacked since they traded Shaun Rogers three years ago. Best is a versatile, gamebreaking talent, though he is coming off of serious injuries (concussion, back) at Cal. Spievey fits the profile Schwartz likes in his secondary as a tough, physical corner who is solid in run support. Fox is the developmental tackle this team sorely needed, while Young is a pass-rushing project. Toone was Mr. Irrelevant, but he just might stick as a punt returner.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Hill, Shaun	QB	6-3	220	8	Maryland	FA-SF-10	FA-Min-02
9 Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	232	1	Georgia	D1a-09	D1a-Det-09
5 Stanton, Drew	QB	6-3	230	3	Michigan State	D2a-07	D2a-Det-07

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21 Brown, Aaron	RB	6-1	205	1	TCU	D6-09	D6-Det-09
45 Felton, Jerome	FB	6-0	246	2	Furman	D5b-08	D5b-Det-08
28 Morris, Maurice	RB	5-11	216	8	Oregon	FA-Sea-09	D2-Sea-02
34 Smith, Kevin	RB	6-1	217	2	Central Florida	D3-08	D3-Det-08

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Burleson, Nate	WR	6-0	198	7	Nevada	FA-Sea-10	D3-Min-03
87 Clark, Ryan	WR	6-2	204	3	NC State	FA-TB-10	FA-Den-06
18 Fowler, Eric	WR	6-3	210	1	Grand Valley	FA-09	FA-Pit-07
47 Gronkowski, Dan	TE	6-5	260	1	Maryland	D7c-09	D7c-Det-09
19 Heckendorf, Kole	WR	6-2	191	1	North Dakota State	FA-09	FA-GB-09
89 Heller, Will	TE	6-6	275	8	Georgia Tech	FA-Sea-09	FA-TB-03
17 Jennings, Adam	WR	5-9	180	4	Fresno State	FA-09	D6-Atl-06
80 Johnson, Bryant	WR	6-3	215	7	Penn State	FA-SF-09	D1-Ari-03
81 Johnson, Calvin	WR	6-5	236	3	Georgia Tech	D1-07	D1-Det-07
85 Nordin, Jake	TE	6-3	255	3	Northern Illinois	FA-09	FA-NE-07
86 Northcutt, Dennis	WR	5-11	172	10	Arizona	T-Jac-09	D2-Cle-00
84 Pettigrew, Brandon	TE	6-5	265	1	Oklahoma State	D1b-09	D1b-Det-09
85 Scheffler, Tony	TE	6-5	255	4	Western Michigan	T-Den-10	D2-Den-06
12 Williams, Derrick	WR	5-11	197	1	Penn State	D3b-09	D3b-Det-09

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
76 Backus, Jeff	T	6-5	305	9	Michigan	D1-01	D1-Det-01
77 Cherilus, Gosder	T	6-7	325	2	Boston College	D1-08	D1-Det-08
65 Gandy, Dylan	C	6-3	295	4	Texas Tech	FA-09	D4-Ind-05
64 Gerberry, Dan	C	6-3	302	1	Ball State	FA-09	FA-Det-09
78 Hillard, Corey	OL	6-6	300	3	Oklahoma State	FA-09	D6-NE-07
68 Jansen, Jon	T	6-6	305	11	Michigan	FA-09	D2-Was-99
66 Peterman, Stephen	G	6-4	323	5	LSU	FA-06	D3-Dal-04
73 Quarterman, Kurt	G	6-5	348	3	Louisville	FA-09	FA-Atl-07
51 Raiola, Dominic	C	6-1	295	9	Nebraska	D2a-01	D2a-Det-01
63 Ramirez, Manny	G	6-3	326	3	Texas Tech	D4b-07	D4b-Det-07
74 Schuening, Roy	G	6-3	315	2	Oregon State	W-Oak-09	D5-StL-08
67 Sims, Rob	G	6-3	312	4	Ohio State	T-Sea-10	D4-Sea-06

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
61 Askew, Mathias	DT	6-5	302	3	Michigan State	FA-09	D4-Cin-04
92 Avril, Cliff	DE	6-3	260	2	Purdue	D3c-08	D3c-Det-08
94 Bryan, Copeland	DE	6-4	253	2	Arizona	W-Buf-09	FA-Ten-06
60 Cohen, Joe	DT	6-2	310	2	Florida	FA-09	D4-SF-07
98 Cohen, Landon	DT	6-3	300	2	Ohio	D7-08	D7-Det-08
95 DeVries, Jared	DE	6-4	275	11	Iowa	D3-99	D3-Det-99
96 Fluellen, Andre	DT	6-2	302	2	Florida State	D3b-08	D3b-Det-08
79 Hill, Sammie	DT	6-4	329	1	Stillman	D4-09	D4-Det-09
97 Hunter, Jason	DE	6-4	271	4	Appalachian State	W-GB-09	FA-GB-06
75 McBride, Turk	DE	6-2	278	3	Tennessee	W-KC-09	D2-KC-07
93 Vanden Bosch, Kyle	DE	6-4	278	9	Nebraska	FA-Ten-10	D2-Ari-01
99 Williams, Corey	DL	6-4	320	6	Arkansas State	T-Cle-10	D6-GB-04

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Ciurciu, Vinny	LB	6-0	240	7	Boston College	FA-09	FA-Car-03
57 Dizon, Jordon	LB	6-0	232	2	Colorado	D2-08	D2-Det-08
49 Follett, Zack	LB	6-1	236	1	California	D7-09	D7-Det-09
55 Johnson, Landon	LB	6-2	232	7	Purdue	FA-Car-10	D3-Cin-04
54 Levy, DeAndre	LB	6-2	238	1	Wisconsin	D3a-09	D3a-Det-09
59 Peterson, Julian	LB	6-3	245	10	Michigan State	T-Sea-09	D1-SF-00

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
27 Bullocks, Daniel	S	6-0	212	4	Nebraska	D2-06	D2-Det-06
26 Delmas, Louis	S	5-11	202	1	Western Michigan	D2-09	D2-Det-09
38 Faggins, Demarcus	CB	5-10	182	8	Kansas State	FA-09	D6-Hou-02
23 Houston, Chris	CB	5-11	178	3	Arkansas	T-Atl-10	D2b-Atl-07
29 King, Eric	CB	5-10	190	5	Wake Forest	FA-Ten-09	D5-Buf-05
40 Manuel, Marquand	S	6-0	213	8	Florida	FA-09	D6-Cin-02
43 Pratt, Paul	CB	5-10	185	1	Nevada	FA-09	FA-Det-09
30 Simpson, Ko	S	6-1	202	4	South Carolina	T-Buf-09	D4-Buf-06
41 Wade, Jonathan	CB	5-10	198	3	Tennessee	FA-StL-10	D3-StL-07
Wesley, Dante	CB	6-1	210	8	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-Car-10	D4-Car-02
25 White, Marvin	CB	6-1	199	3	TCU	W-Dal-09	D4-Cin-07
42 Williams, Jack	CB	5-9	183	2	Kent State	W-Den-09	D4-Den-08
33 WorDDaniels, Jahi	CB	6-0	194	1	Georgia Tech	FA-09	FA-SF-09

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Hanson, Jason	K	6-0	190	18	Washington State	D2b-92	D2b-Det-92
2 Harris, Nick	P	6-2	218	9	California	W-Cin-03	D4-Den-01
48 Muhlbach, Don	LS	6-4	265	6	Texas A&M	FA-04	FA-Bal-04

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	81	Calvin Johnson
	12	Derrick Williams
WR	13	Nate Burleson
	80	Bryant Johnson
LT	76	Jeff Backus
		Jason Fox (R)
LG	67	Rob Sims
	63	Manny Ramirez
C	51	Dominic Raiola
	65	Dylan Gandy
RG	66	Stephen Peterman
	65	Dylan Gandy
RT	77	Gosder Cherilus
	68	Jon Jansen
TE	84	Brandon Pettigrew
	85	Tony Scheffler
QB	9	Matthew Stafford
	14	Shaun Hill
FB	45	Jerome Felton
RB		Jahvid Best (R)
	34	Kevin Smith

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	95	Jared DeVries
	97	Jason Hunter
DT		Ndamukong Suh (R)
	96	Andre Fluellen
DT	99	Corey Williams
	91	Sammie Hill
DE	93	Kyle Vanden Bosch
	92	Cliff Avril
OLB	49	Zack Follett
	57	Jordon Dizon
MLB	54	DeAndre Levy
	55	Landon Johnson
OLB	59	Julian Peterson
	52	Vinny Ciurciu
CB	23	Chris Houston
	41	Jonathan Wade
CB		Amari Spievey (R)
	29	Eric King
SS	30	Ko Simpson
	27	Daniel Bullocks
FS	26	Louis Delmas
	36	Marquand Manuel

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jason Hanson
KR	12	Derrick Williams
P	2	Nick Harris
PR	13	Nate Burleson

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Jim Schwartz
Offensive Coordinator: Scott Linehan
Asst. Head Coach/Defensive Coordinator: Gunther Cunningham
Special Teams: Danny Crossman
Asst. Special Teams: Bradford Banta
Running Backs: Sam Gash
Wide Receivers: Shawn Jefferson
Tight Ends: Tim Lappano
Offensive Line: George Yarno
Offensive Quality Control: Todd Downing
Defensive Line: Kris Kocurek
Linebackers: Matt Burke
Secondary: Tim Walton
Asst. Secondary: Daron Roberts
Defensive Assistant: Don Clemons
Coord. of Physical Development: Jason Arapoff

FANTASY FLASH

In each of his first two seasons, running back **Kevin Smith** has finished second on the team in receptions behind Calvin Johnson. Smith hauled in 39 balls as a rookie in 2008, then 41 in only 13 games last year. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(2–14)*

Sept. 13	at New Orleans	L	27–45
Sept. 20	Minnesota	L	13–27
Sept. 27	Washington	W	19–14
Oct. 4	at Chicago	L	24–48
Oct. 11	Pittsburgh	L	20–28
Oct. 18	at Green Bay	L	0–26
Nov. 1	St. Louis	L	10–17
Nov. 8	at Seattle	L	20–32
Nov. 15	at Minnesota	L	10–27
Nov. 22	Cleveland	W	38–37
Nov. 26	Green Bay	L	12–34
Dec. 6	at Cincinnati	L	13–23
Dec. 13	at Baltimore	L	3–48
Dec. 20	Arizona	L	24–31
Dec. 27	at San Francisco	L	6–20
Jan. 3	Chicago	L	23–37

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at Green Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	St. Louis	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Week 7	BYE	
Oct. 31	Washington	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Buffalo	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at Dallas	1:00 pm
Nov. 25	New England (Thu.)	12:30 pm
Dec. 5	Chicago	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	Green Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	at Miami	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Minnesota	1:00 pm

green bay PACKERS

2 NFC NORTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER: 112,120 stockholders
PRESIDENT/CEO: Mark Murphy
GENERAL MANAGER: Ted Thompson
STADIUM: Lambeau Field (72,928)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.packers.com
TICKETS: 920-438-1640
TRAINING CAMP: Nitschke Field (Green Bay, Wis.)

Five-Year Win Trend

PLAYOFFS Playoffs

When Packers coach Mike McCarthy arrived at the annual NFL meetings in Orlando, Fla., last spring, one of the first people he bumped into was Steve Sabol. Sabol, the president of NFL Films, was working on a featurette on the play that ended the Packers' season: In overtime of their wild card game against Arizona, Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers was sacked on a blitz. The ball came loose and ricocheted off Rodgers' foot and into the arms of linebacker Karlos Dansby, who took it into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown in the Cardinals' 51–45 victory.

As Dansby was crossing the goal line, NFL Films' cameras caught the normally even-keeled McCarthy on the Packers' sideline, dropping to his knees in shock and disappointment. "My one moment of drama," McCarthy says, shaking his head. "Wish I wouldn't have done it."

But if the Packers turn out to be as good as they look on paper heading into 2010, McCarthy might be spared another heartbreaking ending come playoff time. While they'll face stiff competition within the NFC North (from defending division champion Minnesota) and in the conference (New Orleans, Dallas and surely others), the Packers have the makings of a team that could wind up in Super Bowl XLV.

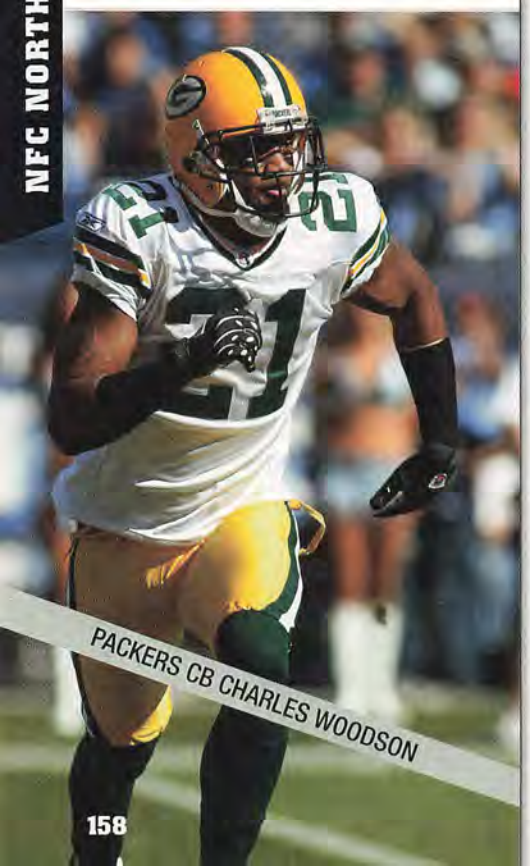
"I think we've got a pretty good team," says Packers general manager Ted Thompson. "We have to play well; we're not the kind of team that can just throw our helmets out there and win the game. But when we play well, we're pretty good."

COACHES McCarthy enters his fifth season as coach with a 39–28 record (including 1–2 in the postseason). After firing virtually all of his defensive staff following the '08 season and switching to the 3-4 defense under new coordinator Dom Capers, McCarthy was generally pleased with the results; the Packers finished No. 1 in the NFL against the run (83.3 yards per game) and No. 2 in total defense (284.4). But they had some glaring problems against the pass that belied their more-than-respectable No. 5 ranking (201.1-yard average) — four of their six losses were largely because of poor pass defense. Improvement in that area was an emphasis for coaches in the offseason. Offensive coordinator Joe Philbin doesn't call the plays under the offensive-minded McCarthy, but he has a sharp football mind and manages the offense effectively. He isn't afraid to be the "bad cop" when it comes to criticizing the unit. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS Rodgers was terrific in his second season as a starter, completing 64.7 percent of his passes for 4,434 yards, 30 touchdowns and seven interceptions for a passer rating of 103.2. After earning his first Pro Bowl berth in his second season as a starter, Rodgers has already become one of the league's elite quarterbacks. If he stays healthy, there's no reason he shouldn't remain there. But staying healthy is no given when you're being sacked a league-high 50 times, though not all of those can be pinned on his blockers. Rodgers needs to get better at throwing the ball away to avoid sacks. Of course, there's a fine line there for Rodgers, who also ran for 316 yards and five touchdowns and bought time frequently with his feet. Matt Flynn, a 2008 seventh-round pick, is a more-than-capable backup. ***GRADE: A-***

RUNNING BACKS Underappreciated running back Ryan Grant had an outstanding season, especially when you consider that he plays in a pass-first offense run by an air-centric playcaller in McCarthy. He had 282 carries for 1,253 yards (4.4-yard average) and 11 touchdowns — not bad for a guy many Packers fans complain about incessantly. Plus, in those 282 carries, Grant did not lose a fumble. There is reason to wonder how the Packers would fare if the durable Grant suffered a significant injury. Backup Brandon Jackson, a 2007 second-round pick, has flashed on occasion and developed into a solid third down back, but whether he could carry the load in Grant's stead remains an unknown. Fullback John Kuhn had three touchdowns (one rushing, two receiving) in 15 touches last season. ***GRADE: B***

RECEIVERS Rodgers' life is good given the weapons he has in his arsenal. After a slow start, wide receiver Greg Jennings rebounded to finish with 68 receptions for four touchdowns and a team-high 1,113 yards. The ageless Donald Driver, who turned 35 in February, continued his productive run into his mid-30s with another strong year (1,061 yards and team highs with 70 catches and six touchdowns). James Jones and Jordy Nelson also give Rodgers good targets, but the biggest improvement to the receiving corps last season was the emergence of tight end Jermichael Finley in his second season. After essentially redshirting as a rookie, he exploded for 55 catches for 676 yards and five touchdowns in only 13 games and brought a vertical tight end dimension to the offense not seen in these parts since Keith Jackson joined the club in the mid-1990s. ***GRADE: B+***



PACKERS CB CHARLES WOODSON

Woodson, Rodgers: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Take That, Rex Cornerback Charles Woodson has no time for Jets coach Rex Ryan, who questioned the intelligence of voters who picked Woodson over Jets cornerback Darrelle Revis in the NFL Defensive Player of the Year balloting last year. "I'll just say this: I was reading a book, and there was an interesting quote in there. It was, 'The greatest form of arrogance is the feeling of entitlement.' Rex is a good coach, but to feel he's entitled to something or whoever he coaches is entitled to something, it's dead wrong. Revis is a really, really good player. Take nothing away from him. But to feel like somebody owes you something in this game, it's just wrong." While Ryan stood by his belief that Revis should have won the award, he later backtracked on some of his criticism of Woodson.

Offseason Workouts Jermichael Finley and Ryan Grant took up interesting offseason workout programs. Finley started boxing for several weeks at his home near Austin, Texas, before joining the team's official strength and conditioning program. Grant did mixed martial arts training with FOX Sports' Jay Glazer.

2009 STATS

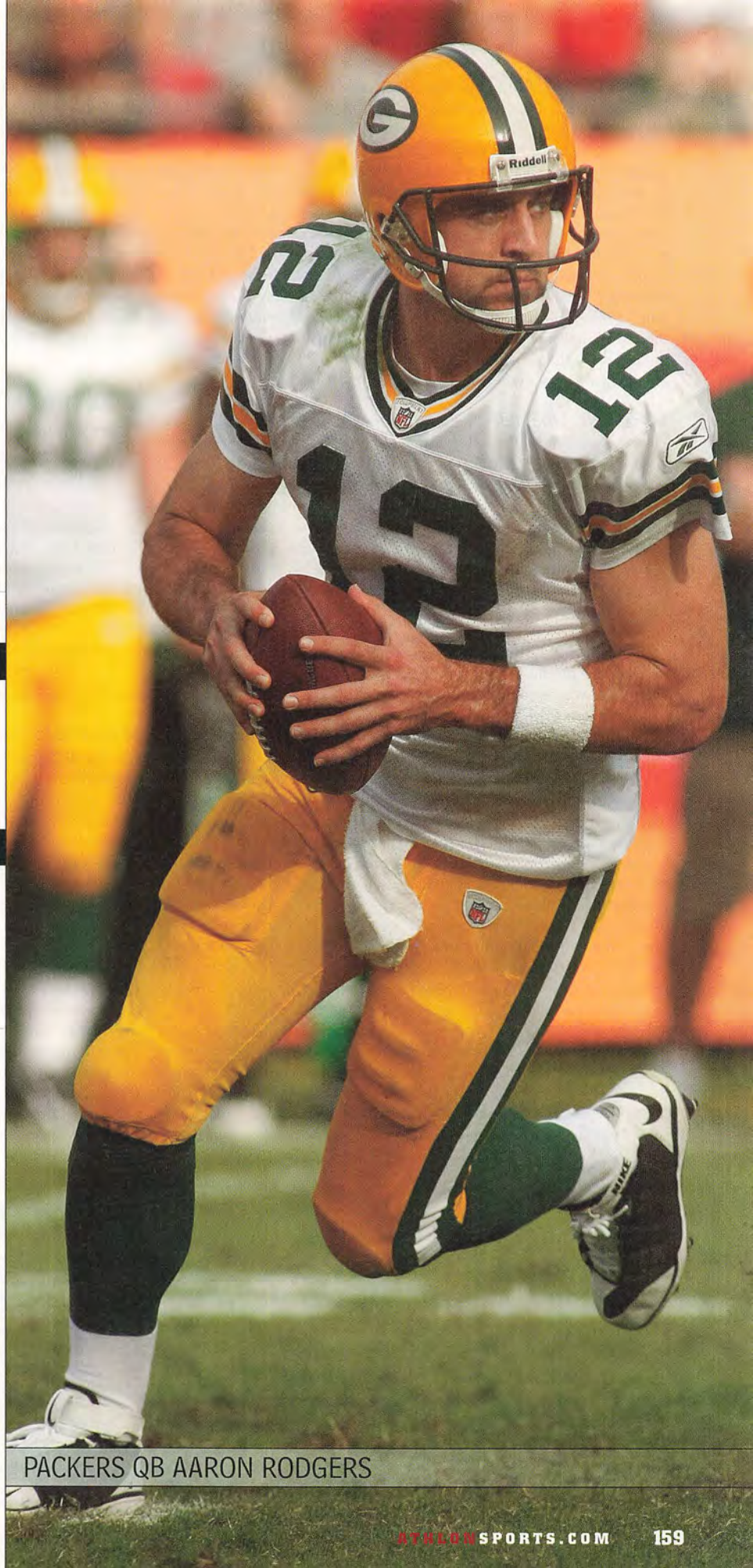
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	379.1	6	4
Rushing	117.8	14	5
Passing	261.2	7	3
Scoring	28.8	3	3
Punt Returns	6.9	23	12
Kick Returns	22.1	19	8
Red Zone TD %	54.8	9	6

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	284.4	2	1
Rushing	83.3	1	1
Passing	201.1	5	2
Scoring	18.6	7	3
Interceptions	30	1	1
Sacks	37	T11	7
Turnover Differential	+24	1	1

SCOUTING THE PACKERS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP GREEN BAY

"What's going to be key for them is Mark Tauscher and Chad Clifton. That's going to be key. If they can get one more really solid year out of those two guys and not feel like they're forced to play younger players, then I think they're going to be a team to beat. … Jermichael Finley's a guy that causes defensive coaches nightmares. You don't know how to defend him when they use him right. … I liked what they did with their draft. It wasn't flashy, but they knew they had to get some O-line help, especially after what happened last year with the injuries. … I expect B.J. Raji to be a lot better this year. He got hurt early and didn't really find himself. You know how it is with the D-line guys. It takes 'em a couple years to really start to show you why you drafted them so high. … Clay Matthews is a star in the making. I know he went to the Pro Bowl last year and all that, but I think he's a legitimate (annual) Pro Bowl, difference-maker kind of guy."



PACKERS QB AARON RODGERS

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The line play was a nightmare the first few weeks of the season as Rodgers took a beating, but the unit jelled during the second half behind center Scott Wells, right guard Josh Sitton, tackle T.J. Lang and old veteran Mark Tauscher, the right tackle who re-signed with the team in March and essentially saved the season with his veteran savvy and knowhow. Tauscher and left tackle Chad Clifton both missed games with injuries, but the line improved as they managed to stay in the lineup over the last half of the season. Both tackles were re-signed in the offseason, and the Packers used the No. 23 overall pick in the draft on Iowa's Bryan Bulaga, who will back up Clifton and could be forced into action if the 34-year-old's body falters. Jason Spitz, coming off back surgery, will compete with Daryn Colledge for the latter's left guard spot. The line is anything but a certainty, but there is hope that it will be more consistent and productive across the board than it was a year ago. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The key last season was 340-pound Ryan Pickett, who had always played defensive tackle in 4-3 defenses but wound up leading the Packers to the NFL's No. 1-ranked run defense as a 3-4 nosetackle. But Pickett wasn't the only player who turned out to be well suited to the scheme. End Johnny Jolly was a one-man wrecking crew at times, and end Cullen Jenkins had success, too, after bellyaching about the limitations he faced in the 3-4. The group should be even better in 2010 with B.J. Raji, the No. 9 overall pick in the 2009 draft, at full strength and the addition of rookie second-round pick Mike Neal of Purdue. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS Green Bay's defensive prowess was due in large part to the play of the linebackers, particularly outside linebacker Clay Matthews, who earned a trip to the Pro Bowl with a fabulous rookie season. When GM Ted Thompson traded a second- and two third-round picks to move up into the first round to take Matthews at No. 26 in 2009, it turned out to be a stroke of genius — albeit completely out of character for Thompson, who is more accustomed to trading back, not up. Matthews' team-high 10 sacks set a rookie team record. The other outside spot was less productive; Aaron Kampman was a disappointment even before he suffered a season-ending torn ACL and was replaced by rookie seventh-round pick Brad Jones. There was little drop-off with Jones, who figures to start with Kampman now in Jacksonville, but it's unclear if he's the long-term answer. On the inside, Nick Barnett got stronger as the year wore on as his torn ACL from 2008 continued to improve. Fellow inside linebacker A.J. Hawk, the No. 5 overall pick in 2005, still has more than a few detractors, but his play last season was steady and at times terrific. Brandon Chillar is solid in reserve. ***GRADE: B-***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Cornerback Charles Woodson, the reigning NFL Defensive Player of the Year, is experiencing a career renaissance that could eventually land him in Canton. Woodson was magnificent in 2009, tying for the league high with nine interceptions, including three that he returned for touchdowns. He was the keystone for a defense that led the NFL in interceptions (30), takeaways (40) and turnover margin (plus-24). What's more, Woodson elevated his game when cornerback Al Harris, a two-time Pro Bowler, was lost for the season to a torn ACL. The Packers are counting on a healthy return from Harris, whose absence was felt most acutely when former nickelback Tramon Williams got scorched by the Cardinals in the playoffs. The Packers didn't draft a single cornerback, so they will pray that Harris, Pat Lee and Will Blackmon can return to form and that Brandon Underwood will grow up in a hurry after an inconsistent rookie year. The Packers traded up to draft Georgia Tech safety Morgan Burnett, who will challenge veteran Atari Bigby for the starting strong safety job alongside free safety Nick Collins, a two-time Pro Bowl pick. ***GRADE: B+***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Chris Bryan	P	None	Aaron Kampman	OLB	Jacksonville
			Mike Montgomery	DE	Minnesota

In typical Ted Thompson fashion, the Packers were nonfactors in the free agent market again. Only in 2006, when Thompson signed Charles Woodson and Ryan Pickett, has the team been active. Instead, Thompson focused on keeping his own players, including nosetackle Pickett, offensive tackles Chad Clifton and Mark Tauscher and safety Nick Collins. Kampman, who was ill-suited for the 3-4 defense, jumped at Jacksonville's offer to return to a 4-3. Montgomery was also a bad fit for the scheme and was granted his wish to be released.

SPECIALISTS Problems in the punting game prompted Green Bay to jettison the inconsistent Jeremy Kapinos, leaving unproven Tim Masthay to battle Australian import Chris Bryan for the job. Truth be told, things can't get much worse. Meanwhile, kicker Mason Crosby suffered through a troublesome slump that the Packers hope he can escape. Blackmon suffered a season-ending torn ACL in the fourth game of the season that basically derailed the return game for the rest of the season. Blackmon was a game-changer on punt returns in 2008, and he was making strides as a kickoff returner when he went down. His return to form is necessary for the return game to be productive. ***GRADE: D+***

FINAL ANALYSIS The pieces are there — or at least the Packers' brass is convinced that they are. The Packers were, as usual, a nonfactor in free agency, and they drafted with an eye on the future, which means that Thompson did little to alter the roster from a year ago. But then this team made a strong run to the playoffs with an injury-riddled roster a year ago, and a healthy lineup could be even better. Barring another rash of injuries, this team should contend for a berth in Super Bowl XLV.

Steve Woltmann

GREEN BAY IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Bryan Bulaga	T	6-5	314	Iowa
2. Mike Neal	DE	6-3	294	Purdue
3. Morgan Burnett	S	6-1	209	Georgia Tech
5. Andrew Quarless	TE	6-4	254	Penn State
5. Marshall Newhouse	OL	6-4	319	TCU
6. James Starks	RB	6-2	218	Buffalo
7. C.J. Wilson	DE	6-3	290	East Carolina

GM Ted Thompson's seven-player haul seemed to be more about being good in 2011, 2012 and 2013 than about having an immediate impact on 2010. While Bulaga, Neal and Burnett will see action this season, no one in this class plays the positions of most glaring need: cornerback and outside linebacker. To draft Bulaga, Thompson chose not to take TCU sack machine Jerry Hughes, whom he could have paired with Clay Matthews. Quarless is immensely talented but came with character questions. Newhouse figures to move to guard after playing tackle at TCU. Starks, a 1,300-yard back as a junior, missed his senior season with a shoulder injury. Wilson could wind up being a seventh-round steal.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Flynn, Matt	QB	6-2	225	2	LSU	D7a-08	D7a-GB-08
13 Pizzotti, Chris	QB	6-5	226	1	Harvard	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
12 Rodgers, Aaron	QB	6-2	220	5	California	D1-05	D1-GB-05
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
25 Grant, Ryan	RB	6-1	222	3	Notre Dame	T-NYG-07	FA-NYG-05
35 Hall, Korey	FB	6-0	236	3	Boise State	D6a-07	D6a-GB-07
32 Jackson, Brandon	RB	5-10	216	3	Nebraska	D2-07	D2-GB-07
45 Johnson, Quinn	FB	6-1	255	1	LSU	D5a-09	D5a-GB-09
30 Kuhn, John	FB	6-0	250	4	Shippensburg	W-Pit-07	FA-Pit-05
28 Lumpkin, Kregg	RB	5-11	228	2	Georgia	FA-08	FA-GB-08
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
83 Crabtree, Tom	TE	6-4	245	1	Miami (OH)	FA-09	FA-KC-09
80 Driver, Donald	WR	6-0	194	11	Alcorn State	D7b-99	D7b-GB-99
88 Finley, Jermichael	TE	6-5	247	2	Texas	D3-08	D3-GB-08
41 Havner, Spencer	TE	6-3	250	1	UCLA	FA-08	FA-Was-06
85 Jennings, Greg	WR	5-11	198	4	Western Michigan	D2b-06	D2b-GB-06
89 Jones, James	WR	6-1	208	3	San Jose State	D3a-07	D3a-GB-07
17 Jones, Khalil	WR	6-1	212	1	Miami	FA-09	FA-Atl-09
86 Lee, Donald	TE	6-4	248	7	Mississippi State	FA-05	D5-Mia-03
87 Nelson, Jordy	WR	6-3	217	2	Kansas State	D2a-08	D2a-GB-08
16 Swain, Brett	WR	6-0	203	1	San Diego State	D7b-08	D7b-GB-08
18 Williams, Patrick	WR	6-1	204	1	Colorado	FA-09	FA-GB-09
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
78 Barbre, Allen	T/G	6-4	305	3	Missouri Southern	D4-07	D4-GB-07
76 Clifton, Chad	T	6-5	320	10	Tennessee	D2-00	D2-GB-00
73 Colledge, Daryn	G	6-4	308	4	Boise State	D2a-06	D2a-GB-06
64 Daniels, Stanley	G	6-4	328	1	Washington	FA-09	FA-StL-07
62 Dietrich-Smith, Evan	G/C	6-2	305	1	Idaho State	FA-09	FA-GB-09
68 Giacomini, Breno	T	6-7	311	2	Louisville	D5-08	D5-GB-08
70 Lang, T.J.	G/T	6-4	316	1	Eastern Michigan	D4-09	D4-GB-09
71 Sitton, Josh	G	6-3	322	2	Central Florida	D4b-08	D4b-GB-08
72 Spitz, Jason	C/G	6-3	307	4	Louisville	D3b-06	D3b-GB-06
65 Tauscher, Mark	T	6-3	316	10	Wisconsin	D7a-00	D7a-GB-00
63 Wells, Scott	C	6-2	300	6	Tennessee	D7-04	D7-GB-04
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
91 Harrell, Justin	DE	6-4	320	3	Tennessee	D1-07	D1-GB-07
77 Jenkins, Cullen	DE	6-2	305	6	Central Michigan	FA-04	FA-GB-03
97 Jolly, Johnny	DE	6-3	325	4	Texas A&M	D6a-06	D6a-GB-06
79 Pickett, Ryan	NT	6-2	340	9	Ohio State	FA-StL-06	D1-StL-01
90 Raji, B.J.	NT	6-2	337	1	Boston College	D1a-09	D1a-GB-09
95 Talley, Ronald	DE	6-3	286	1	Delaware	FA-09	FA-GB-09
93 Toribio, Anthony	NT	6-1	315	1	Carson-Newman	FA-08	FA-Mia-08
94 Wynn, Jarius	DE	6-3	285	1	Georgia	D6a-09	D6a-GB-09
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
56 Barnett, Nick	LB	6-2	236	7	Oregon State	D1-03	D1-GB-03
55 Bishop, Desmond	LB	6-2	238	3	California	D6b-07	D6b-GB-07
54 Chillar, Brandon	LB	6-3	237	6	UCLA	FA-StL-08	D4-StL-04
49 Francois, Robert	LB	6-3	255	1	Boston College	FA-09	FA-Min-09
50 Hawk, A.J.	LB	6-1	250	4	Ohio State	D1-06	D1-GB-06
59 Jones, Brad	LB	6-3	239	1	Colorado	D7-09	D7-GB-09
52 Matthews, Clay	LB	6-3	250	1	USC	D1b-09	D1b-GB-09
57 Obiozor, Cyril	LB	6-4	249	1	Texas A&M	FA-09	FA-GB-09
51 Poppinga, Brady	LB	6-3	250	5	BYU	D4b-05	D4b-GB-05
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Bell, Josh	CB	5-11	177	2	Baylor	FA-09	FA-SD-08
20 Bigby, Atari	S	5-11	213	4	Central Florida	FA-05	FA-Mia-05
27 Blackmon, Will	CB	6-0	206	4	Boston College	D4b-06	D4b-GB-06
24 Bush, Jarrett	CB/S	6-0	200	4	Utah State	W-Car-06	FA-Car-06
43 Clark, D.J.	CB	6-1	200	1	Idaho State	FA-09	FA-Car-09
36 Collins, Nick	S	5-11	207	5	Bethune-Cookman	D2a-05	D2a-GB-05
39 Ford, Trevor	CB	6-0	188	1	Troy	FA-09	FA-GB-09
31 Harris, Al	CB	6-1	190	12	Texas A&M-Kings.	T-Phi-03	D6-TB-97
22 Lee, Pat	CB	6-0	194	2	Auburn	D2c-08	D2c-GB-08
29 Martin, Derrick	S	5-10	198	4	Wyoming	T-Bal-09	D6-Bal-06
46 Peprah, Charlie	S	5-11	203	4	Alabama	FA-Atl-10	D5-NYG-06
33 Underwood, Brandon	CB	6-1	191	1	Cincinnati	D6b-09	D6b-GB-09
38 Williams, Tramon	CB	5-11	191	3	Louisiana Tech	FA-06	FA-Hou-06
21 Woodson, Charles	CB	6-1	202	12	Michigan	FA-Oak-06	D1-Oak-98
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Chris Bryan	P	6-5	210	0	None	FA-10	FA-GB-10
2 Crosby, Mason	K	6-1	207	3	Colorado	D6c-07	D6c-GB-07
61 Goode, Brett	LS	6-1	261	2	Arkansas	FA-08	FA-Jac-08
8 Masthay, Tim	K	6-1	197	0	Kentucky	FA-10	FA-Ind-09

Mark Rebilas/US Presswire

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	85	Greg Jennings
	89	James Jones
WR	80	Donald Driver
	87	Jordy Nelson
LT	76	Chad Clifton
	75	Bryan Bulaga (R)
LG	72	Jason Spitz
	73	Daryn Colledge
C	63	Scott Wells
	72	Jason Spitz
RG	71	Josh Sitton
	74	Marshall Newhouse (R)
RT	65	Mark Tauscher
	70	T.J. Lang
TE	88	Jermichael Finley
	86	Donald Lee
QB	12	Aaron Rodgers
	10	Matt Flynn
FB	30	John Kuhn
	35	Korey Hall
RB	25	Ryan Grant
	32	Brandon Jackson

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	97	Johnny Jolly
	94	Jarius Wynn
NT	79	Ryan Pickett
	90	B.J. Raji
DE	77	Cullen Jenkins
	96	Mike Neal (R)
OLB	59	Brad Jones
	51	Brady Poppinga
ILB	50	A.J. Hawk
	54	Brandon Chillar
ILB	56	Nick Barnett
	55	Desmond Bishop
OLB	52	Clay Matthews
	57	Cyril Obiozor
CB	21	Charles Woodson
	38	Tramon Williams
CB	31	Al Harris
	27	Will Blackmon
SS	20	Atari Bigby
	42	Morgan Burnett (R)
FS	36	Nick Collins
	29	Derrick Martin

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Mason Crosby
KR	87	Jordy Nelson
P	9	Chris Bryan
PR	27	Will Blackmon

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Mike McCarthy
Offensive Coordinator: Joe Philbin
Defensive Coordinator: Dom Capers
Special Teams: Shawn Slocum
Asst. Special Teams: Chad Morton
Quarterbacks: Tom Clements
Running Backs: Edgar Bennett
Wide Receivers: Jimmy Robinson
Tight Ends: Ben McAdoo
Offensive Line: James Campen
Assistant Offensive Line: Jerry Fontenot
Defensive Line: Mike Trgovac
Asst. Head Coach/Inside Linebackers: Winston Moss
Outside Linebackers: Kevin Greene
Safeties: Darren Perry
Cornerbacks: Joe Whitt Jr.
Offensive Quality Control: John Rushing
Defensive Quality Control: Scott McCurley
Strength and Conditioning: Mark Lovat

FANTASY FLASH

Tight end **Jermichael Finley** missed four games due to injury in 2009. His stats in the other 12 games had him on pace for 73 catches, 901 yards and seven TDs. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(11–5)*

Sept. 13	Chicago		W	21–15
Sept. 20	Cincinnati		L	24–31
Sept. 27	at St. Louis		W	36–17
Oct. 5	at Minnesota		L	23–30
Oct. 18	Detroit		W	26– 0
Oct. 25	at Cleveland		W	31– 3
Nov. 1	Minnesota		L	26–38
Nov. 8	at Tampa Bay		L	28–38
Nov. 15	Dallas		W	17– 7
Nov. 22	San Francisco		W	30–24
Nov. 26	at Detroit		W	34–12
Dec. 7	Baltimore		W	27–14
Dec. 13	at Chicago		W	21–14
Dec. 20	at Pittsburgh		L	36–37
Dec. 27	Seattle		W	48–10
Jan. 3	at Arizona		W	33– 7
Postseason				
Jan. 10	at Arizona	(ot)	L	45–51

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Philadelphia	4:15 pm
Sept. 19	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Sept. 27	at Chicago (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Oct. 3	Detroit	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Washington	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	Miami	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Minnesota	8:20 pm
Oct. 31	at N.Y. Jets	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	Dallas	8:20 pm
Week 10	BYE	
Nov. 21	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Atlanta	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	San Francisco	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at New England	8:20 pm
Dec. 26	N.Y. Giants	4:15 pm
Jan. 2	Chicago	1:00 pm

minnesota VIKINGS

1 NFC NORTH FORECAST

MINNESOTA

NFC NORTH

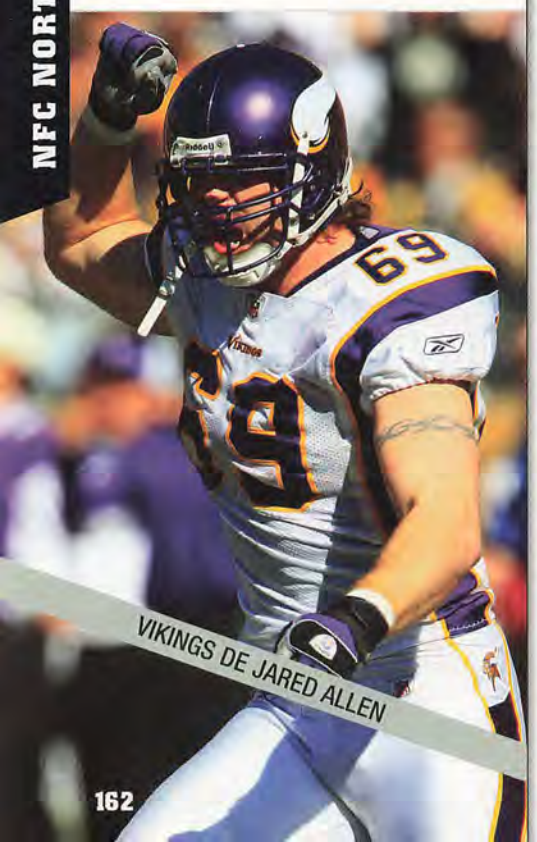
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER/CHAIRMAN: Zygi Wilf
VICE PRESIDENT OF PLAYER PERSONNEL: Rick Spielman
STADIUM: Metrodome (64,121)
SURFACE: FieldTurf
WEBSITE: www.vikings.com
TICKETS: 612-338-4537
TRAINING CAMP: Minnesota State (Mankato, Minn.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	9	
2006	6	
2007	8	
2008	10	PLAYOFFS
2009	12	PLAYOFFS

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



VIKINGS DE JARED ALLEN

After coming tantalizingly close to earning a trip to the Super Bowl last season, the Vikings approached this season with the same question hanging over their heads as the previous summer: Will Brett Favre be their quarterback? In typical Favre fashion, he retreated to his Mississippi home after the season without making any public declaration about his intentions, saying only that he would take his time. Even so, most Vikings fans and observers expect that he will return for his 20th season, thus ensuring the Vikings again will be considered a Super Bowl contender. Favre had one of the best seasons of his career in 2009, and there's no reason to think he can't continue to play at a high level while surrounded by lots of talent on offense.

With Favre, the Vikings have the pieces in place in all three phases to make a run at a championship. The schedule is more difficult this season, but they have a group of core veterans who realize their window of opportunity is open right now.

COACHES Brad Childress has steadily built the Vikings into one of the top teams in the NFL in his four seasons and was rewarded with a contract extension that will run through 2013. Childress has been widely criticized by Vikings fans throughout his tenure — mostly for his handling of the quarterback situation and missteps as a first-year coach — but it's hard to argue with his results. His win total has improved every season (six, eight, 10, 12), and his once-maligned version of the West Coast offense flourished with Favre running the show. Childress also has maintained continuity with his coordinators. Darrell Bevell (offense) is entering his fifth season with the team, and Leslie Frazier (defense) is in his fourth. Bevell proved last season that he is capable of using all the talent at his disposal. The Vikings finished second in the NFL in scoring (470 points) and became a pass-first offense rather than one that relied heavily on Adrian Peterson. The Vikings became only the second team in NFL history to have six players catch at least 40 passes. Frazier's defense should rank among the NFL's best again, particularly against the run. His Tampa 2 scheme is built around stopping the run, getting pressure on the quarterback and limiting explosive pass plays over the top. The defense's success under Frazier has made him a hot candidate for head coaching jobs in recent years, and it seems inevitable that some team will hire him in the near future. ***GRADE: A-***

QUARTERBACKS Favre's decision to postpone retirement for a second time last season was greeted with some skepticism. So much for that. Favre played magnificently despite turning 40 in October. He completed 68.4 percent of his passes for 4,202 yards and 33 touchdowns and only seven interceptions. Favre's surgically repaired right arm held up, and his teammates embraced him. Favre's experience last season is why many believe he will return in 2010. It will be difficult to duplicate his 2009 production, but Favre certainly wants to redeem himself after throwing an interception on a potential game-winning drive against the Saints in the NFC Championship Game. In the unlikely event that Favre doesn't return, the Vikings will turn the offense over to either Tarvaris Jackson or Sage Rosenfels. Jackson held the No. 2 job all last season and presumably will handle that role again. The Vikings traded for Rosenfels last offseason before Favre came out of retirement, and the veteran was inactive every game. ***GRADE: A***

RUNNING BACKS Peterson has rushed for more yards than any NFL running back over the past three seasons. He has also fumbled more times, and that has become a major problem. Peterson vowed to make substantive changes in how he protects the ball after fumbling twice and causing a botched exchange with Favre in the NFC title game. Peterson's production dropped as the Vikings relied more on the passing game last season. He failed to rush for 100 yards in any of the final seven regular-season games. But make no mistake: Peterson remains the focal point for opposing defensive coordinators. Even so, the Vikings need Peterson to play a bigger role on third down now that Chester Taylor is in Chicago. Peterson improved as a receiver out of the backfield last season, and he needs to continue to make strides and also show that he's reliable in pass protection. The Vikings drafted Heisman Trophy runner-up Toby Gerhart, a punishing runner at Stanford who should help take some of the burden off Peterson. The Vikings also like third-year back Albert Young, who will compete with Gerhart for the No. 2 job. ***GRADE: B***

RECEIVERS The receiving corps was a major question heading into last season, but now it's a position of strength. Sidney Rice thrived with Favre as his quarterback and earned his first Pro Bowl trip. Rice is a terrific talent who uses his size (6'4") and catch radius to his advantage in one-on-one matchups. Percy Harvin, who won Offensive Rookie of the Year honors in 2009, is a dynamic slot receiver who quickly earned Favre's trust, particularly on third down.

Allen, Peterson: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Just for Kicks Jared Allen is an ardent mixed martial arts fan and has become friends with numerous professional fighters. Alex Karalexis, a well-known MMA fighter who competed in The Ultimate Fighter reality series, has trained Allen the past few summers, and Allen worked the corner for him in a World Extreme CageFighting event in Sacramento in April. His role? "I'm going to pull out as many lines from *Karate Kid* as I can," Allen says. "You know, 'Put him in a body bag, Alex.'"

Coming Back Home Kickoff specialist Rhys Lloyd went to high school in the Twin Cities and played college football at the University of Minnesota. He is returning home after signing a two-year contract with the Vikings. Lloyd, who was Carolina's kickoff specialist the past two seasons, should thrive in the climate-controlled Metrodome. "It's going to be strange," he says. "Two years ago I kicked here with the Panthers against Minnesota. I was in the Gophers' locker room (for visiting NFL teams). I actually had my old locker on the Gophers, and it wasn't intentional, either. It was quite scary. It brought back a lot of memories."

2009 STATS

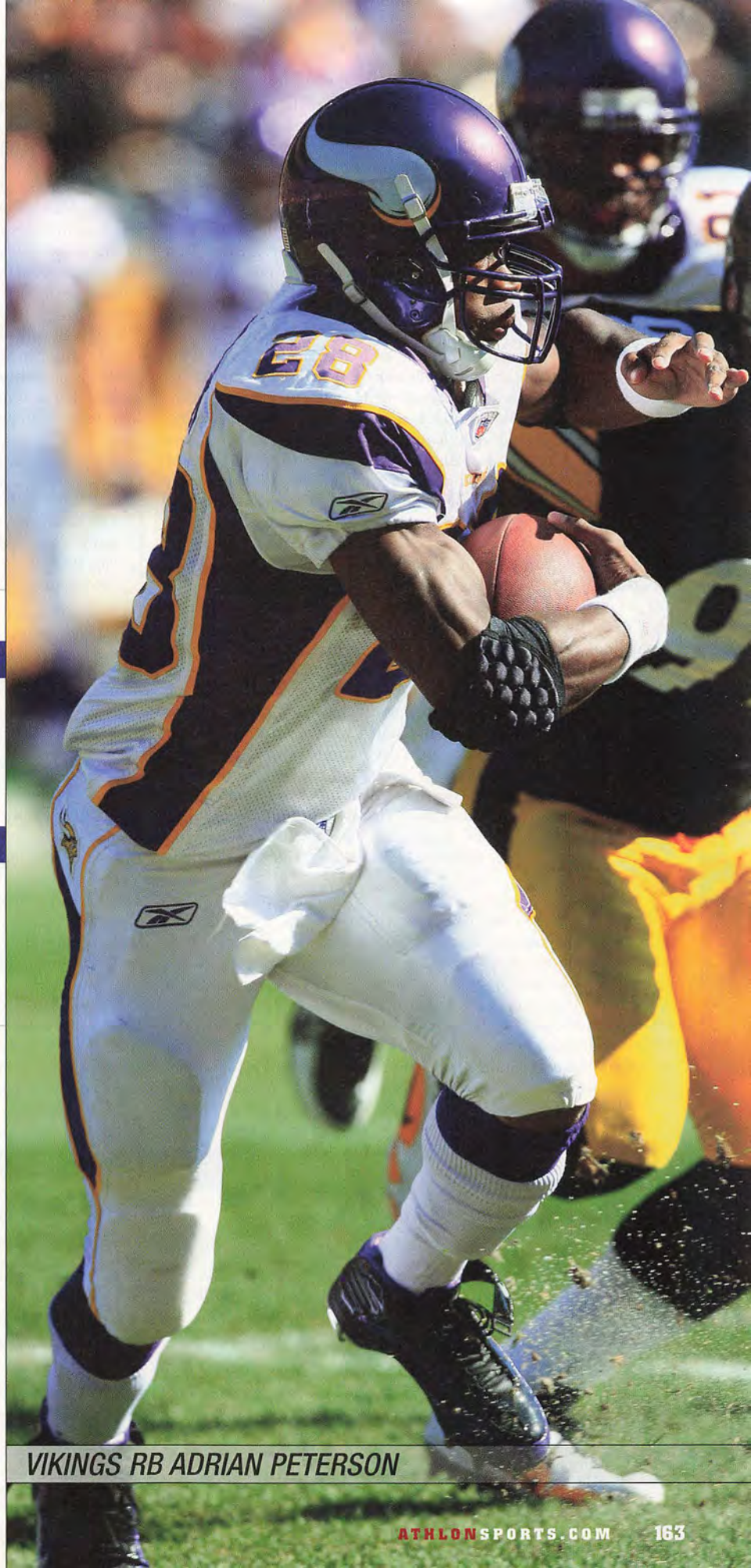
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	379.6	5	3
Rushing	119.9	13	4
Passing	259.8	8	4
Scoring	29.4	2	2
Punt Returns	9.5	T11	7
Kick Returns	23.2	T11	T6
Red Zone TD %	62.3	3	2

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	305.5	6	2
Rushing	87.1	2	2
Passing	218.4	19	8
Scoring	19.5	10	5
Interceptions	11	T26	T12
Sacks	48	1	1
Turnover Differential	+6	T8	T5

SCOUTING THE VIKINGS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP MINNESOTA

"Everything — and I mean everything — is based on Brett Favre. Is he going to come back? If he does, is he going to be as good as he was last year? … You know Favre's coming back with that team they've got in place there. And all that stuff about his decision being a distraction is just the media talking. … Toby Gerhart needs to be a workhorse to be effective. He needs 15-20 touches, and he's not going to get that with Adrian Peterson there. Chester Taylor could come in and be effective no matter how many touches he got. I'm not sure it's going to be the same with Gerhart. Peterson obviously needs to take better care of the football. … They're going to have issues at left tackle. Bryant McKinnie's not nearly as good as people think and he's got off-the-field issues. I think they're going to have issues offensively if they have any injuries. I know they have Sidney Rice, Percy Harvin, Adrian Peterson — they have quick-strike ability."



VIKINGS RB ADRIAN PETERSON

Tight end Visanthe Shiancoe creates matchup problems for defenses because of his combination of size and speed, and he is a force in the red zone (11 touchdowns last season). Bernard Berrian struggled with a hamstring injury last year, but he can stretch the field with his speed when healthy. ***GRADE: A***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN This group needs to show more consistency. With two new starters in 2009, the line struggled at times and contributed to problems in the running game. Left guard Steve Hutchinson is still an elite player, but left tackle Bryant McKinnie must give a more consistent effort. Center John Sullivan had a bull's-eye on him last season as the replacement for long-time Viking Matt Birk. Sullivan did a decent job, particularly against much larger nose-tackles, but the Vikings are counting on him to make big strides this season. Sullivan compensates for his lack of size by using his quickness and savvy. Right tackle Phil Loadholt returns after a promising rookie season in which he proved to be better in pass protection than originally thought. He is a tough, hard-nosed competitor who could be a staple on the line for years. Anthony Herrera returns at right guard, but a lack of depth up front is a concern. The Vikings lost their top backup, Artis Hicks, to Washington in free agency and need to find someone who can play multiple positions. ***GRADE: B-***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Vikings should have one of the premier fronts in the NFL again this season. Jared Allen is a pass-rushing terror off the edge. Allen's 72 sacks since 2004 lead all NFL players in that span. It also helps that he has tackle Kevin Williams playing beside him. Williams is a perennial All-Pro player who can rush the quarterback and is tough against the run. He makes it difficult for teams to double-team Allen on the outside. Nosetackle Pat Williams is returning for his 14th season after saying he would consider retirement. Pat Williams plays only in running situations and has battled injuries the past few seasons, but he's still a tough run-stopper when healthy. Left end Ray Edwards is coming off the best season of his career (8.5 sacks). Edwards sees more than his share of one-on-one matchups because of Allen and the Williams Wall, and he's capable of winning those battles. The Vikings already had good depth along the line before adding USC defensive end Everson Griffen in the draft. ***GRADE: A***

LINEBACKERS The key to this unit is the health of middle linebacker and team captain E.J. Henderson, who is trying to return from a fractured femur suffered last December. It was a horrific injury that left Henderson's playing future in doubt, but he says he hopes to be ready to start training camp. That would be a huge lift to a unit that missed his presence. Chad Greenway is on track to become a Pro Bowl player, and veteran Ben Leber is an unsung hero who played in the middle in nickel situations. Jasper Brinkley, a rookie fifth-round pick last year, started in place of Henderson after the injury and showed some promise. Brinkley is a big hitter who is more comfortable defending the run than the pass. ***GRADE: B***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Favre's decision notwithstanding, the secondary was the biggest question for the Vikings this offseason. Pro Bowl cornerback Antoine Winfield is coming off a serious foot injury and is entering his 12th season. Cedric Griffin suffered a torn ACL covering a kickoff in the NFC title game and likely won't be ready by the start of the season. The team signed veteran Lito Sheppard on the eve of the draft as insurance. Sheppard, a two-time Pro Bowl selection, was released by the Jets after one season and now should get a chance to start as Griffin recovers. The Vikings also drafted Virginia cornerback Chris Cook with the No. 34 overall pick. The Vikings must get better play from their safeties this season. Tyrell Johnson and Madieu Williams missed too many tackles and combined for only one interception last season. Second-year safety Jamarca Sanford will push both for a starting job in camp. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Rhys Lloyd	K	Carolina	Artis Hicks	OL	Washington
Lito Sheppard	CB	N.Y. Jets	Chester Taylor	RB	Chicago

Taylor and Hicks were backups, but they were valuable in what they provided. Taylor led all NFL running backs in third down catches the past two seasons and excels as a pass-blocker. Hicks served as the Vikings' utility offensive lineman. Sheppard should fit in nicely with this Tampa 2 defense and likely will win a starting job as Cedric Griffin recovers from ACL surgery. The Vikings hope Lloyd's ability to put the ball in the end zone on kickoffs will improve their field position and keep Ryan Longwell's leg fresh late in the season.

SPECIALISTS Ryan Longwell turns 36 but remains one of the most reliable kickers in the NFL (92.9 percent of his field-goal attempts last season). The Vikings demonstrated a change in philosophy by signing kickoff specialist Rhys Lloyd, who handled that role in Carolina. Lloyd had 21 touchbacks last season, compared with only five by Longwell. Punter Chris Kluwe has altered his approach by focusing on hang time more than distance. Harvin is a constant threat to score on kick returns. ***GRADE: A***

FINAL ANALYSIS The Vikings will enter the season as a legitimate Super Bowl contender if, as expected, Favre returns for a second season. This is a veteran team full of stars that is built to win now. The schedule is more difficult than in 2009, but the talent is in place to make another deep postseason run.

Paul Jasienski

MINNESOTA IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2. Chris Cook	CB	6-2	212	Virginia
2. Toby Gerhart	RB	6-0	231	Stanford
4. Everson Griffen	DE	6-3	273	USC
5. Chris DeGeare	OL	6-4	325	Wake Forest
5. Nate Triplett	LB	6-3	247	Minnesota
6. Joe Webb	WR	6-4	220	UAB
7. Mickey Shuler	TE	6-4	247	Penn State
7. Ryan D'Imperio	FB	6-2	241	Rutgers

This draft class likely won't have the same impact as the 2009 class, which included Percy Harvin and four other rookies who started at least one game. But the Vikings filled their two biggest needs while adding depth to the back end of the roster. Cook is the biggest defensive back on the roster and will be used in press coverage. Gerhart should step in as the No. 2 running back behind Adrian Peterson. Griffen is an intriguing prospect. Scouts considered him a first-round talent, but he fell to the fourth round because of his lack of consistency. He has freakish athleticism, so he could be a nice pickup. As many as four picks will likely find themselves on the practice squad.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Favre, Brett	QB	6-2	222	19	Southern Miss	FA-NYJ-09	D2-Atl-91
7	Jackson, Tarvaris	QB	6-2	225	4	Alabama State	D2c-06	D2c-Min-06
2	Rosenfels, Sage	QB	6-4	225	9	Iowa State	T-Hou-09	D4-Was-01
RUNNING BACKS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
42	Johnson, Ian	RB	5-11	212	1	Boise State	FA-09	FA-Min-09
28	Peterson, Adrian	RB	6-1	217	3	Oklahoma	D1-07	D1-Min-07
38	Tahi, Naufahu	FB	6-0	254	4	BYU	PS-Cin-06	FA-Cin-06
34	Young, Albert	RB	5-10	209	1	Iowa	FA-08	FA-Min-08
RECEIVERS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
87	Berrian, Bernard	WR	6-1	185	6	Fresno State	FA-Chi-08	D3-Chi-04
83	Dugan, Jeff	TE	6-4	258	6	Maryland	D7-04	D7-Min-04
12	Harvin, Percy	WR	5-11	184	1	Florida	D1-09	D1-Min-09
11	Johnson, Jaymar	WR	6-0	176	1	Jackson State	D6b-08	D6b-Min-08
40	Kleinsasser, Jim	TE	6-3	272	11	North Dakota	D2-99	D2-Min-99
17	Lewis, Greg	WR	6-0	185	7	Illinois	FA-09	FA-Phi-03
45	Mills, Garrett	TE	6-1	235	3	Tulsa	W-NE-07	D4-NE-06
27	Reynaud, Darius	WR	5-9	201	2	West Virginia	FA-08	FA-Min-08
18	Rice, Sidney	WR	6-4	202	3	South Carolina	D2-07	D2-Min-07
81	Shiancoe, Visanthe	TE	6-4	250	7	Morgan State	FA-NYG-07	D3-NYG-03
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
78	Brown, Patrick	T	6-5	310	1	Central Florida	FA-09	FA-Car-09
75	Clark, Chris	T	6-5	315	1	Southern Miss	FA-08	FA-TB-08
62	Cook, Ryan	T	6-6	328	4	New Mexico	D2b-06	D2b-Min-06
68	Cooper, Jon	C	6-2	291	1	Oklahoma	FA-09	FA-Min-09
64	Herrera, Anthony	G	6-2	315	6	Tennessee	FA-04	FA-Min-04
76	Hutchinson, Steve	G	6-5	313	9	Michigan	FA-Sea-06	D1-Sea-01
71	Loadholt, Phil	T	6-8	343	1	Oklahoma	D2-09	D2-Min-09
74	McKinnie, Bryant	T	6-8	335	8	Miami	D1-02	D1-Min-02
60	Radovich, Drew	T	6-5	305	2	USC	FA-09	FA-Min-08
65	Sullivan, John	C	6-4	301	2	Notre Dame	D6a-08	D6a-Min-08
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
69	Allen, Jared	DE	6-6	270	6	Idaho State	T-KC-08	D4-KC-04
91	Edwards, Ray	DE	6-5	268	4	Purdue	D4-06	D4-Min-06
90	Evans, Fred	DT	6-4	305	4	Texas State	FA-07	D7-Mia-06
98	Guion, Letroy	DT	6-4	303	2	Florida State	D5b-08	D5b-Min-08
95	Johnson, Tremaine	DT	6-2	285	1	LSU	FA-09	FA-Min-09
71	Kennedy, Jimmy	DT	6-5	320	7	Penn State	FA-Jac-08	D1-StL-03
92	Mitchell, Jayme	DE	6-6	285	4	Ole Miss	FA-06	FA-Min-06
99	Montgomery, Mike	DE	6-5	282	5	Texas A&M	FA-GB-10	D6a-GB-05
96	Robison, Brian	DE	6-3	259	3	Texas	D4-07	D4-Min-07
93	Williams, Kevin	DT	6-5	311	7	Oklahoma State	D1-03	D1-Min-03
94	Williams, Pat	DT	6-3	317	13	Texas A&M	FA-Buf-05	FA-Buf-97
LINEBACKERS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
54	Brinkley, Jasper	LB	6-1	252	1	South Carolina	D5-09	D5-Min-09
59	Farwell, Heath	LB	6-0	235	5	San Diego State	FA-05	FA-Min-05
52	Greenway, Chad	LB	6-2	242	4	Iowa	D1-06	D1-Min-06
56	Henderson, E.J.	LB	6-1	245	7	Maryland	D2-03	D2-Min-03
50	Henderson, Erin	LB	6-3	244	2	Maryland	FA-08	FA-Min-08
51	Leber, Ben	LB	6-3	244	8	Kansas State	FA-SD-06	D3-SD-02
57	Leman, J	LB	6-2	240	1	Illinois	FA-09	FA-Min-08
55	Onatolu, Kenny	LB	6-2	225	1	Nebraska-Omaha	FA-09	FA-Min-09
DEFENSIVE BACKS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
39	Abdullah, Husain	S	6-0	204	2	Washington State	FA-08	FA-Min-08
21	Allen, Asher	CB	5-9	194	1	Georgia	D3-09	D3-Min-09
49	Anderson, Colt	S	5-10	194	1	Montana	FA-09	FA-Min-09
37	Frampton, Eric	S	5-11	205	3	Washington State	W-Det-07	D5-Oak-07
23	Griffin, Cedric	CB	6-0	203	4	Texas	D2a-06	D2a-Min-06
25	Johnson, Tyrell	S	6-0	207	2	Arkansas State	D2-08	D2-Min-08
33	Sanford, Jamarca	S	5-10	200	1	Ole Miss	D7-09	D7-Min-09
22	Sapp, Benny	CB	5-9	190	6	Northern Iowa	FA-KC-08	FA-KC-04
29	Sheppard, Lito	CB	5-10	194	8	Florida	FA-NYJ-10	D1-Phi-02
20	Williams, Madieu	S	6-1	203	6	Maryland	FA-Cin-08	D2-Cin-04
26	Winfield, Antoine	CB	5-9	180	11	Ohio State	FA-Buf-04	D1-Buf-99
SPECIALISTS		**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
5	Kluwe, Chris	P	6-4	215	5	UCLA	W-Sea-05	FA-Sea-05
	Lloyd, Rhys	K	5-11	231	3	Minnesota	FA-Car-10	FA-Bal-05
46	Loeffler, Cullen	LS	6-5	241	6	Texas	FA-04	FA-Min-04
8	Longwell, Ryan	K	6-0	200	13	California	FA-GB-06	FA-SF-97

Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	87	Bernard Berrian
	17	Greg Lewis
WB	18	Sidney Rice
	17	Greg Lewis
WR	12	Percy Harvin
	27	Darius Reynaud
LT	74	Bryant McKinnie
	72	Chris DeGeare (R)
LG	76	Steve Hutchinson
	72	Chris DeGeare
C	65	John Sullivan
	68	Jon Cooper
RG	64	Anthony Herrera
	62	Ryan Cook
RT	71	Phil Loadholt
	62	Ryan Cook
TE	81	Visanthe Shiancoe
	40	Jim Kleinsasser
QB	4	Brett Favre
	7	Tarvaris Jackson
RB	28	Adrian Peterson
	32	Toby Gerhart (R)

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LE	91	Ray Edwards
	97	Everson Griffen (R)
DT	94	Pat Williams
	90	Fred Evans
DT	93	Kevin Williams
	71	Jimmy Kennedy
RE	69	Jared Allen
	96	Brian Robison
LB	52	Chad Greenway
	59	Heath Farwell
LB	56	E.J. Henderson
	54	Jasper Brinkley
LB	51	Ben Leber
	50	Erin Henderson
CB	26	Antoine Winfield
	31	Chris Cook (R)
CB	29	Lito Sheppard
	23	Cedric Griffin
SS	25	Tyrell Johnson
	33	Jamarca Sanford
FS	20	Madieu Williams
	33	Jamarca Sanford

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Ryan Longwell
KR	12	Percy Harvin
P	5	Chris Kluwe
PR	27	Darius Reynaud

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Brad Childress
Offensive Coordinator: Darrell Bevell
Asst. Head Coach/Def. Coord.: Leslie Frazier
Special Teams Coordinator: Brian Murphy
Special Teams Assistant: Jason Glenn
Quarterbacks: Kevin Rogers
Running Backs: Eric Bieniemy
Wide Receivers: George Stewart
Tight Ends: Jimmie Johnson
Offensive Line: Pat Morris
Assistant Offensive Line: Jim Hueber
Defensive Line: Karl Dunbar
Defensive Asst./Defensive Line: Diron Reynolds
Linebackers: Fred Pagac
Defensive Backs: Joe Woods
Assistant Defensive Backs: Derek Mason
Strength and Conditioning: Tom Kanavy
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Juney Barnett

FANTASY FLASH

Sidney Rice was the model of consistency during a career year in 2009. He hauled in three or more balls in all but one game, and six or more balls in nine of his final 13 games (including the playoffs). *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(12–4)*

Sept. 13	at Cleveland	W	34–20
Sept. 20	at Detroit	W	27–13
Sept. 27	San Francisco	W	27–24
Oct. 5	Green Bay	W	30–23
Oct. 11	at St. Louis	W	38–10
Oct. 18	Baltimore	W	33–31
Oct. 25	at Pittsburgh	L	17–27
Nov. 1	at Green Bay	W	38–26
Nov. 15	Detroit	W	27–10
Nov. 22	Seattle	W	35– 9
Nov. 29	Chicago	W	36–10
Dec. 6	at Arizona	L	17–30
Dec. 13	Cincinnati	W	30–10
Dec. 20	at Carolina	L	7–26
Dec. 28	at Chicago (ot)	L	30–36
Jan. 3	N.Y. Giants	W	44– 7
Postseason			
Jan. 17	Dallas	W	34– 3
Jan. 24	at New Orleans (ot)	L	28–31

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 9	at New Orleans	8:30 pm
Sept. 19	Miami	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	Detroit	1:00 pm
Week 4	BYE	
Oct. 11	at N.Y. Jets	8:30 pm
Oct. 17	Dallas	4:15 pm
Oct. 24	at Green Bay	8:20 pm
Oct. 31	at New England	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	Arizona	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Green Bay	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Washington	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	Buffalo	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Dec. 20	Chicago	8:30 pm
Dec. 26	at Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at Detroit	1:00 pm

atlanta FALCONS

2 NFC SOUTH FORECAST

ATLANTA

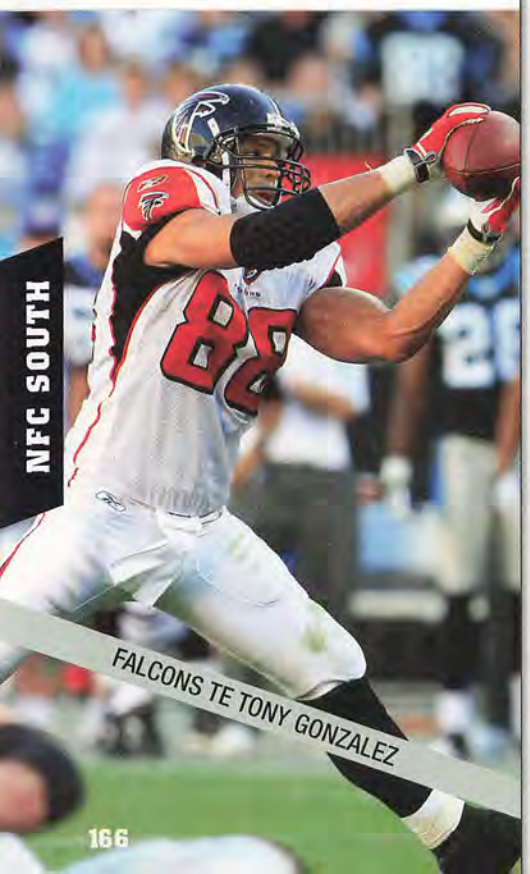
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Arthur Blank
PRESIDENT: Rich McKay
GENERAL MANAGER: Thomas Dimitroff
STADIUM: Georgia Dome (71,250)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.atlantafalcons.com
TICKETS: 404-223-8000
TRAINING CAMP: Falcons Training Facility (Flowery Branch, Ga.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	8	
2006	7	
2007	4	
2008	11	PLAYOFFS
2009	9	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



FALCONS TE TONY GONZALEZ

NFC SOUTH

In 2009, Atlanta completed back-to-back winning seasons for the first time in franchise history. But now it's time to turn the corner. The Falcons failed to make the playoffs last year, and expectations are high that they will get there in 2010. The Falcons have a superb stable of running backs, a talented passing game and a veteran line, giving them balance on offense. The defense could rank among the most improved in the NFL. The Falcons signed free agent cornerback Dunta Robinson in an attempt to improve a vulnerable secondary and used their first-round draft pick on Missouri linebacker Sean Weatherspoon. Neither side of the ball should be overmatched most weeks.

The Falcons were ravaged by injuries a year ago, but that won't be a viable excuse if they don't produce this year. Atlanta needs to take the next step, and that's to challenge New Orleans for the NFC South title and get back to the postseason.

COACHES The Falcons existed for 42 years without posting consecutive winning seasons. Coach Mike Smith has been in Atlanta just two years and doesn't know any other way. Smith acts as a CEO of the defense and believes in rotation up front. His philosophy begins with the defensive tackles occupying the inside blockers, putting the rush ends in one-on-one situations. Defensive coordinator Brian VanGorder executes that philosophy with a base 4-3, Cover 2 scheme that doesn't use much press or bump-and-run. He uses selective blitzing and is creative with it, often disguising the blitz before bringing a corner, linebacker or combination. Offensive coordinator Mike Mularkey believes the game is won with power running that opens up play-action passes downfield. Mularkey likes to employ motion to offset opposing defenses and will sometimes use a number of gadget plays. ***GRADE: B***

QUARTERBACKS To say Matt Ryan had a sophomore slump would be unfair. While his numbers were down compared to his 2008 rookie season, Ryan had to deal with a painful turf toe injury and showed growth on the football field, especially with his decision-making. He was asked to throw more as Mularkey opened up his playbook and put more trust in his young quarterback. Year 3 for Ryan should involve fewer growing pains and more successful plays. Ryan has the intangibles and is lauded by his teammates as one of the hardest workers on the team. Backing up Ryan is Chris Redman, a veteran from Louisville who stepped in for three games when Ryan was hurt last season. Redman is a capable backup and understands the offense well. However, Redman's ability to read blitzes has been a problem during his career. ***GRADE: B+***

RUNNING BACKS Last season was disappointing for Michael Turner, who was coming off of a Pro Bowl, 1,699-yard effort the year before. He battled a nagging high ankle sprain that sidelined him most of the last half of the season. If Turner stays healthy, he'll rack up plenty of yards and touchdowns, although he might find himself sharing a few more carries with the playmakers behind him. The Falcons are three-deep at running back. Backup No. 1 is Jerious Norwood, a shifty and speedy scatback who is dangerous in the open field. Three concussions and other nagging injuries limited his touches last year. Backup No. 2 is Jason Snelling, a hybrid tailback/fullback who finished 2009 with 613 yards rushing, most of them coming after Turner injured his ankle. Atlanta has one of the league's best fullbacks in Ovie Mughelli. Not much of a threat to run or catch the ball, Mughelli is the prototypical blocking fullback you want leading the way. ***GRADE: A-***

RECEIVERS Tony Gonzalez is 34, but he doesn't look like it. Still considered one of the best tight ends in the NFL, Gonzalez caught 83 passes for 867 yards and six touchdowns in 2009. He became Ryan's go-to guy on third down and in the red zone and should play the same role this season. Roddy White has recorded three straight 1,100-yard seasons and is always a threat to stretch the field. Former first-round pick Michael Jenkins is a possession receiver who can flash glimpses of brilliance on occasion. But he also has had his share of drops and goofs over the years. Behind the two starters is Harry Douglas, a speedster who missed all of last season with a torn ACL he suffered at the beginning of training camp. Douglas, who will do most of his work out of the slot, is the X-factor of this unit. He caught a combined 142 passes for 2,424 yards in 2006-07 at Louisville, and his speed and ability to run deep and over the middle could open up the passing game for White, Jenkins and Gonzalez. ***GRADE: B***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Atlanta's starting line is a combination of young, vibrant talent and fundamental veterans collectively known for their mean streak. The line battled numerous injuries throughout 2009, so the No. 1 goal this season is to stay healthy. Left tackle Sam Baker,

Gonzalez, Ryan: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Hands Off the Notebook, Pal Matt Ryan is known for his meticulous approach to off-field study. When asked about offseason preparation in the film room, Ryan says no one should even think about touching his notebook. "You can ask the other quarterbacks," Ryan says. "I'm a big note-taker, and I'm a bit O.C.D. about people touching my notebook."

One More Catch Tony Gonzalez ended the 2009 season just one reception shy of 1,000 career catches. With 999 receptions, Gonzalez ranks first all-time among tight ends and seventh among all receivers.

The Hills are Alive Backup offensive tackle Will Svitek's journey to the NFL began at age 2, when he and his family fled Communist Czechoslovakia. "We pretended we were going on a day hike over the Alps," Svitek says. "It sounds like a typical 'Sound of Music' story. We ended up in Austria and stayed at a refugee camp for eight months. Then we got legalized to come to the U.S."

Welcome Home, Dunta New Falcons cornerback Dunta Robinson returns to the Peach State for the first time since graduating from Clarke Central High in Athens, Ga., in 2000. During offseason conditioning, Robinson commuted to workouts from Athens, which is about an hour from the Falcons' facility in Flowery Branch.

2009 STATS

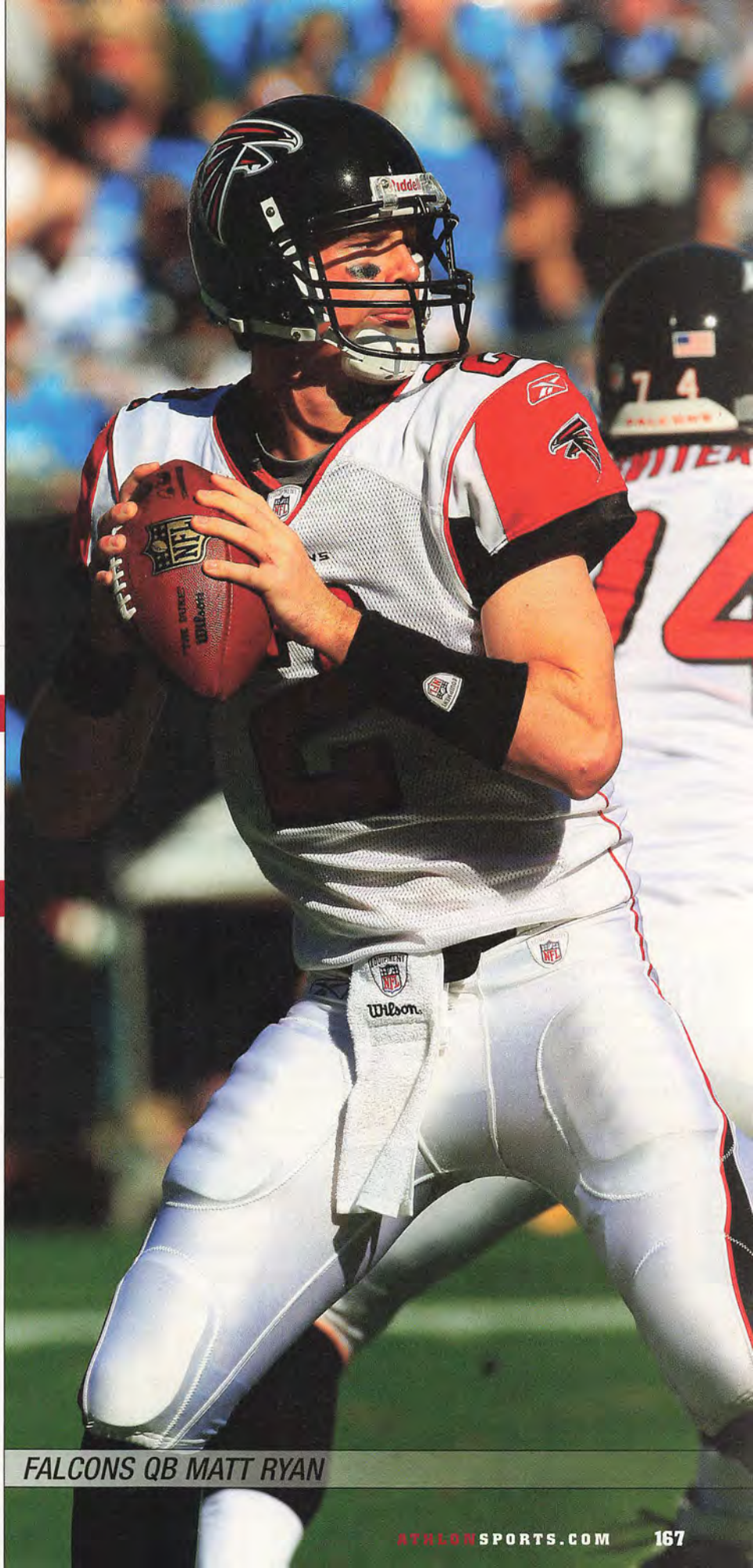
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	340.4	16	8
Rushing	117.2	15	6
Passing	223.2	14	8
Scoring	22.7	13	7
Punt Returns	10.0	T9	6
Kick Returns	24.3	6	4
Red Zone TD %	51.8	15	8

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	348.9	21	11
Rushing	106.9	T10	6
Passing	241.9	28	14
Scoring	20.3	T14	T6
Interceptions	15	T16	8
Sacks	28	T26	T12
Turnover Differential	+3	T11	7

SCOUTING THE FALCONS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP ATLANTA

"I really like the signing of free agent cornerback Dunta Robinson. He's exactly what their defense needs. He's not an elite player, but he was the best corner on the market and a significant upgrade for them at the position. He plays with a chip on his shoulder and should be primed for a big year after signing a big deal with his home-state team. … Atlanta should feel better because they were finally able to get that colorful, playmaking linebacker that they've been looking for (Sean Weatherspoon). … John Abraham wasn't the same player in 2009 as he was in 2008. Injuries have robbed him of some of his explosiveness off the edge. … Their offensive line is underrated. Individually, they're not that impressive, but they play well as a unit. Harvey Dahl and Justin Blalock might be the best set of young guards in the league behind the Saints."



FALCONS QB MATT RYAN

left guard Justin Blalock and center Todd McClure are strictly business and provide solid run-blocking and pass protection. Right guard Harvey Dahl and right tackle Tyson Clabo are nasty, smashmouth linemen who have a reputation for their physicality. Just ask Albert Haynesworth, who said on a radio show that he doesn't have patience for Dahl's and Clabo's style of play. This is a solid, cohesive group that can provide the holes for lots of rushing yards. These same five starters led the way for the team's 2,443 rushing yards (No. 2 in the NFL) in 2008. **GRADE: B+**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN A year after ravaging quarterbacks with 16.5 sacks, right end John Abraham slipped to just 5.5 last season. He was frustrated by double-teams, largely the result of rookie tackle Peria Jerry going down in Week 2 with a torn ACL. At that point, the penetration up the middle ceased. The Falcons are hoping Jerry's return will boost a pass rush that last year gave quarterbacks time to find receivers against a young and vulnerable secondary, which resulted in a lot of points (seven games allowing more than 25) and yards (349 per game). Tackle Jonathan Babineaux, who shouldered most of the inside work last year, will work alongside Jerry. Kroy Biermann spent much of last year spelling Abraham at right end, and doing it quite well (49 tackles and five sacks as a backup). He should start at left end this year. Jamaal Anderson has become a hybrid up front, playing tackle as well as his natural end spot, but he hasn't lived up to billing as the eighth overall pick in the 2007 draft. With just 2.5 sacks in three seasons, it's time for Anderson to produce. **GRADE: C+**

LINEBACKERS You could make a case that middle linebacker Curtis Lofton was a Pro Bowl snub last season. Lofton, who enters his third season after tallying 133 tackles and two forced fumbles a year ago, is solid in run support, flies to the ball and rarely misses tackles. Starting weak-side linebacker Mike Peterson is the veteran leader of this unit, but following the selection of Weatherspoon in the first round of the draft, his starting job could be in jeopardy by the middle of the season. Weatherspoon is agile, has great lateral speed and was excellent in pass coverage at Missouri, where he earned All-America honors in 2009. Strong-side linebacker Stephen Nicholas, a fourth-year pro out of South Florida, is solid against the run but could use work in defending the pass. **GRADE: B-**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Robinson might be the missing piece to Atlanta's secondary puzzle. Atlanta ranked 28th in the NFL against the pass in 2009 (242 yards per game), and Robinson's presence as a lockdown corner should give the linemen an extra second or two to get to the quarterback. Robinson can play both corner spots and nickelback. So can Brian Williams, who enters his second year with Atlanta and ninth in the NFL. Before Williams, who also contributes at safety, ended his season with an ACL tear against Chicago in Game 5, the Falcons had given up more than 20 points in only one game (a loss to New England). The first week without Williams, the Falcons allowed 37 points to Dallas as the secondary issues began to spiral downward. Chris Owens, a second-year corner from San Jose State who jumped into the starting lineup at the end of last season, has a lot of upside and will likely play right corner in nickel packages or when Williams is lined up at safety. Thomas DeCoud could be poised for a breakout year at free safety. He's knowledgeable and reacts well in passing situations. Strong safety Erik Coleman adds veteran leadership, and second-year safety William Moore, sidelined by injuries last season, looks to add quality depth as he can play both safety spots. **GRADE: B**

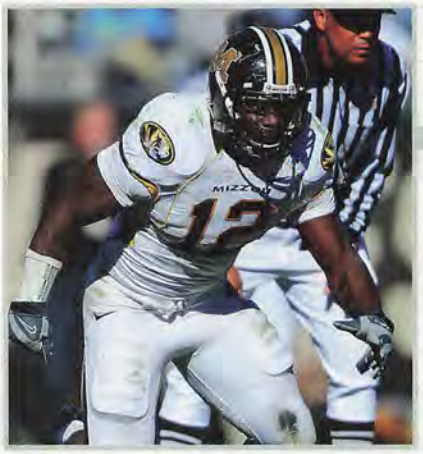
VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Matt Giordano	S	Green Bay	Tye Hill	CB	Tennessee
Dunta Robinson	CB	Houston	Chris Houston	CB	Detroit

Robinson joins Brian Williams and Chris Owens to give Atlanta a solid trio at corner. Robinson needs to turn his pass deflections into interceptions; he had nine pass breakups but zero interceptions in 2009 with the Texans. He is still trying to become the same player he was prior to tearing his ACL in 2007, but if he lives up to his potential, he could shore up a position that was a liability a year ago. Houston, who had problems recognizing the ball in the air, and Hill were part of the problem in the secondary.

SPECIALISTS It's unclear what the Falcons will do at kicker. They could stick with Matt Bryant, who hit 7-of-10 field goals after replacing the released Jason Elam last season, or go with youngster Steven Hauschka or rookie Garrett Lindholm of Division II Tarleton State. However, the Falcons are set at punter with Michael Koenen, who has one of the stronger legs in the NFL. Douglas is the frontrunner to return kicks, which he did in 2008, when he was healthy. Douglas, Norwood and rookie Dominique Franks are candidates to return punts. **GRADE: B**

FINAL ANALYSIS Last season, the Falcons struggled against a difficult schedule and with a number of injuries. Though health can't be predicted, it does appear that Atlanta has a much more manageable schedule in 2010. The team has upgraded at cornerback with Robinson and at linebacker with Weatherspoon, and Jerry's return will help up front. So, the defense will be expected to keep opponents from racking up points the way it did last year. The offense is as balanced as you'll find, and Ryan and Co. should be able to move the ball on just about any team in the league. The Falcons have the talent and experience to make a deep run in the playoffs. Anything less than a postseason berth will be a disappointment.



Larry Smith

ATLANTA IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Sean Weatherspoon	LB	6-1	239	Missouri
2. Corey Peters	DT	6-3	295	Kentucky
3. Mike Johnson	G	6-5	312	Alabama
4. Joe Hawley	C	6-3	297	UNLV
5. Dominique Franks	CB	5-11	194	Oklahoma
6. Kerry Meier	WR	6-2	224	Kansas
7. Shann Schillinger	S	6-0	202	Montana

There was a common theme in this draft class: Versatility and intelligence. Atlanta's first three picks —Weatherspoon, Peters and Johnson — had already graduated from college when selected. They also can play multiple positions within their individual units. Hawley can play both center and guard. The speedy Franks might contribute this season in the return game. Meier doesn't possess elite speed, but the former quarterback was a solid possession receiver at Kansas who was effective in the middle of the field. Schillinger is a bit of an unknown, having played at FCS power Montana. But GM Thomas Dimitroff says Schillinger is strong, hits hard and runs a 4.50 40-yard-dash.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Redman, Chris	QB	6-3	229	7	Louisville	FA-07	D3-Bal-00
2 Ryan, Matt	QB	6-4	213	2	Boston College	D1a-08	D1a-Atl-08
1 Shockley, D.J.	QB	6-0	218	3	Georgia	FA-09	D7-Atl-06
4 Wilson, John Parker	QB	6-2	218	1	Alabama	FA-09	FA-Atl-09

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Mughelli, Ovie	FB	6-1	252	7	Wake Forest	FA-Bal-07	D4-Bal-03
32 Norwood, Jerious	RB	5-11	209	4	Mississippi State	D3-06	D3-Atl-06
35 Smith, Antone	RB	5-9	190	1	Florida State	FA-09	FA-Det-09
44 Snelling, Jason	RB	5-11	223	3	Virginia	D7-07	D7-Atl-07
33 Turner, Michael	RB	5-10	244	6	Northern Illinois	FA-SD-08	D5-SD-04

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11 Bergeron, Troy	WR	6-2	195	1	Middle Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Atl-06
83 Douglas, Harry	WR	6-0	182	2	Louisville	D3b-08	D3b-Atl-08
86 Finneran, Brian	WR	6-5	210	9	Villanova	FA-00	FA-Sea-98
88 Gonzalez, Tony	TE	6-5	243	13	California	T-KC-09	D1-KC-97
12 Jenkins, Michael	WR	6-4	217	6	Ohio State	D1b-04	D1b-Atl-04
87 Peelle, Justin	TE	6-4	251	8	Oregon	FA-08	D4-SD-02
85 Rader, Jason	TE	6-4	263	4	Marshall	FA-09	FA-Atl-04
15 Strickland, Andy	WR	6-0	197	1	Wofford	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
16 Swinton, James	WR	6-0	178	1	Auburn	FA-09	FA-Atl-09
14 Weems, Eric	WR	5-9	194	2	Bethune-Cookman	FA-07	FA-Atl-07
84 White, Roddy	WR	6-0	212	5	UAB	D1-05	D1-Atl-05
89 Zinger, Keith	TE	6-4	258	1	LSU	D7b-08	D7b-Atl-08

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72 Baker, Sam	T	6-5	307	2	USC	D1b-08	D1b-Atl-08
63 Blalock, Justin	G	6-4	329	3	Texas	D2a-07	D2a-Atl-07
67 Bruggeman, Rob	C	6-4	293	1	Iowa	FA-09	FA-TB-07
77 Clabo, Tyson	T	6-6	331	4	Wake Forest	FA-06	FA-Den-04
73 Dahl, Harvey	G	6-5	305	3	Nevada	FA-07	FA-Dal-05
62 McClure, Todd	C	6-1	296	11	LSU	D7a-99	D7a-Atl-99
76 Ojinnaka, Quinn	G	6-5	299	4	Syracuse	D5-06	D5-Atl-06
75 Reynolds, Garrett	T	6-7	317	1	North Carolina	D5b-09	D5b-Atl-09
66 Romberg, Brett	C	6-2	293	6	Miami	FA-09	FA-Jac-03
69 Schlueter, Blake	C	6-2	279	1	TCU	FA-09	D7-Den-09
74 Svitek, Will	T	6-6	309	4	Stanford	FA-09	D6-KC-05
65 Valdez, Jose	G	6-6	324	1	Arkansas	FA-09	FA-Atl-09

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55 Abraham, John	DE	6-4	263	10	South Carolina	T-NYJ-06	D1-NYJ-00
98 Anderson, Jamaal	DE	6-6	289	3	Arkansas	D1-07	D1-Atl-07
95 Babineaux, Jonathan	DT	6-2	296	5	Iowa	D2-05	D2-Atl-05
71 Biermann, Kroy	DE	6-3	260	2	Montana	D5b-08	D5b-Atl-08
92 Davis, Chauncey	DE	6-2	262	5	Florida State	D4-05	D4-Atl-05
94 Jerry, Peria	DT	6-2	294	1	Ole Miss	D1-09	D1-Atl-09
93 Johnson, Thomas	DT	6-2	304	2	Middle Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Dal-05
97 Lewis, Trey	DT	6-3	316	2	Washburn	D6a-07	D6a-Atl-07
90 Sidbury, Lawrence	DE	6-3	265	1	Richmond	D4-09	D4-Atl-09
99 Walker, Vance	DT	6-2	307	1	Georgia Tech	D7-09	D7-Atl-09

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
59 Adkins, Spencer	LB	5-11	242	1	Miami	D6-09	D6-Atl-09
45 James, Robert	LB	5-11	220	1	Arizona State	D5a-08	D5a-Atl-08
50 Lofton, Curtis	LB	6-0	242	2	Oklahoma	D2-08	D2-Atl-08
54 Nicholas, Stephen	LB	6-3	230	3	South Florida	D4a-07	D4a-Atl-07
53 Peterson, Mike	LB	6-1	233	11	Florida	FA-Jac-09	D2-Ind-99
52 Wire, Coy	LB	6-0	225	8	Stanford	FA-08	D3-Buf-02

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Coleman, Erik	S	5-10	207	6	Washington State	FA-08	D5-NYJ-04
28 DeCoud, Thomas	S	6-2	205	2	California	D3c-08	D3c-Atl-08
27 Giordano, Matt	S	5-11	200	5	California	FA-GB-10	D4-Ind-05
20 Grimes, Brent	CB	5-10	181	2	Shippensburg	FA-07	FA-Atl-07
41 Harris, Antoine	S	5-10	205	3	Louisville	FA-07	FA-Ten-05
22 Jackson, Chevis	CB	5-11	193	2	LSU	D3a-08	D3a-Atl-08
25 Moore, William	S	6-0	218	1	Missouri	D2-09	D2-Atl-09
21 Owens, Christopher	CB	5-9	179	1	San Jose State	D3-09	D3-Atl-09
23 Robinson, Dunta	CB	5-10	182	6	South Carolina	FA-Hou-10	D1-Hou-04
29 Williams, Brian	CB	5-11	202	8	NC State	FA-09	D4-Min-02

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Bryant, Matt	K	5-9	200	8	Baylor	FA-09	FA-NYG-02
6 Hauschka, Steve	K	6-4	210	2	NC State	FA-09	FA-Min-08
9 Koenen, Michael	P	5-11	198	5	W. Washington	FA-05	FA-Atl-05
82 Zelenka, Joe	LS	6-3	260	11	Wake Forest	FA-09	FA-SF-99

Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	84	Roddy White
	83	Harry Douglas
WR	12	Michael Jenkins
	86	Brian Finneran
LT	72	Sam Baker
	74	Will Svitek
LG	63	Justin Blalock
	79	Mike Johnson (R)
C	62	Todd McClure
	66	Brett Romberg
RG	73	Harvey Dahl
	76	Quinn Ojinnaka
RT	77	Tyson Clabo
	75	Garrett Reynolds
TE	88	Tony Gonzalez
	87	Justin Peelle
QB	2	Matt Ryan
	8	Chris Redman
FB	34	Ovie Mughelli
	44	Jason Snelling
RB	33	Michael Turner
	32	Jerious Norwood

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LDE	71	Kroy Biermann
	98	Jamaal Anderson
DT	95	Jonathan Babineaux
	97	Trey Lewis
DT	94	Peria Jerry
	99	Vance Walker
RDE	55	John Abraham
	92	Chauncey Davis
WLB	53	Mike Peterson
	56	Sean Weatherspoon (R)
MLB	50	Curtis Lofton
	51	Robert James
SLB	54	Stephen Nicholas
	52	Coy Wire
CB	23	Dunta Robinson
	20	Brent Grimes
CB	29	Brian Williams
	21	Christopher Owens
SS	26	Erik Coleman
	25	William Moore
FS	28	Thomas DeCoud
	27	Matt Giordano

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Matt Bryant
KR	83	Harry Douglas
P	9	Michael Koenen
PR	24	Dominique Franks (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Mike Smith
Offensive Coordinator: Mike Mularkey
Defensive Coordinator: Brian VanGorder
Special Teams: Keith Armstrong
Assistant Special Teams: Eric Sutulovich
Asst. Head Coach/Quarterbacks: Bill Musgrave
Running Backs: Gerald Brown
Wide Receivers: Terry Robiskie
Tight Ends: Chris Scelfo
Offensive Line: Paul Boudreau
Assistant Offensive Line: Paul Dunn
Offensive Quality Control: Glenn Thomas
Defensive Line: Ray Hamilton
Linebackers: Glenn Pires
Secondary: Tim Lewis
Defensive Backs: Alvin Reynolds
Defensive Assistant: Mark Collins
Director of Athletic Performance: Jeff Fish

FANTASY FLASH

Wideout **Roddy White** was targeted a whopping 165 times during the 2009 season, including 10 or more targets on 11 occasions. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(9–7)*

Sept. 13	Miami	W	19– 7
Sept. 20	Carolina	W	28–20
Sept. 27	at New England	L	10–26
Oct. 11	at San Francisco	W	45–10
Oct. 18	Chicago	W	21–14
Oct. 25	at Dallas	L	21–37
Nov. 2	at New Orleans	L	27–35
Nov. 8	Washington	W	31–17
Nov. 15	at Carolina	L	19–28
Nov. 22	at N.Y. Giants (ot)	L	31–34
Nov. 29	Tampa Bay	W	20–17
Dec. 6	Philadelphia	L	7–34
Dec. 13	New Orleans	L	23–26
Dec. 20	at N.Y. Jets	W	10– 7
Dec. 27	Buffalo	W	31– 3
Jan. 3	at Tampa Bay	W	20–10

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Arizona	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	at New Orleans	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	San Francisco	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	at Philadelphia	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Week 8	BYE	
Nov. 7	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Nov. 11	Baltimore (Thur.)	8:20 pm
Nov. 21	at St. Louis	4:05 pm
Nov. 28	Green Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	at Seattle	4:05 pm
Dec. 27	New Orleans (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Jan. 2	Carolina	1:00 pm

carolina PANTHERS

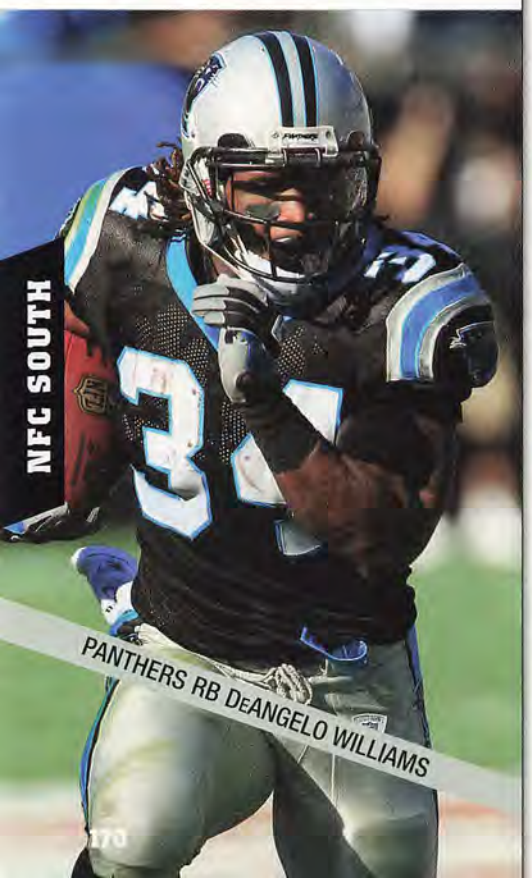
3 NFC SOUTH FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Jerry Richardson
PRESIDENT: Danny Morrison
GENERAL MANAGER: Marty Hurney
STADIUM: Bank of America Stadium (73,504)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.panthers.com
TICKETS: 704-358-7800
TRAINING CAMP: Wofford College (Spartanburg, S.C.)

Five Year Win Trend

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



PANTHERS RB DEANGELO WILLIAMS

The Panthers are a team in the middle of a hurricane. It's not clear how much damage will be done by all the changes, but it's very clear that the Panthers won't look nearly the same in 2010. The Panthers suffered a disappointing 8–8 season in 2009, and they managed to get to .500 only by winning their final three games. The non-playoff season — which followed a 12–4 year in 2008 — continued coach John Fox's streak of having never coached two playoff teams in a row at Carolina.

After the season ended, it became apparent that Panthers owner Jerry Richardson wasn't going to fire Fox but wouldn't extend his contract, either. Fox, then, is in his own "contract year" — he will be free to move on after this season, and the current speculation is that he will.

While Fox remains — for now — the Panthers have lost a large part of their history. The team will have at least nine new starters in 2010. Most notably, quarterback Jake Delhomme is gone, now in Cleveland after his release following a terrible 2009 season. Defensive end Julius Peppers took huge free agent money and went to Chicago. Peppers and Delhomme were two of the team's three most visible and popular players, along with wide receiver Steve Smith. So 2010 has a chance to be a tumultuous, uncertain but exciting year for Carolina.

COACHES In his ninth year as coach, Fox generally has been better when his team has been an underdog rather than a favorite. That will certainly be his role this season as the Panthers rebuild. The members of Fox's staff also are in the last year of their contracts, so there's a natural motivation for the coaches. Offensive coordinator Jeff Davidson prefers Fox's run-first approach and will try to hammer teams while breaking in an inexperienced quarterback, either Matt Moore in his first season as a full-time starter or rookie Jimmy Clausen. Defensive coordinator Ron Meeks got off to a relatively slow start in 2009 but then got his players to buy into his Tampa 2 system. Carolina ended up with the league's No. 8 overall defense. **GRADE: B-**

QUARTERBACKS The Panthers have less experience at this position than any other NFL team. Moore has a 6–2 record as a starter and was 4–1 at the end of 2009, which made the Panthers decide to christen him the tentative No. 1 for 2010. Those eight NFL starts are all the Panthers have — combined. The other three quarterbacks in camp, Hunter Cantwell and rookies Clausen and Tony Pike, have never started an NFL game. Moore is a strong-armed, "What, me worry?" sort who doesn't know every nook and cranny of the playbook but throws well on the move and can really hum a deep ball. The Panthers were delighted when Clausen dropped to them in the second round. There are some questions about his leadership ability and a confidence that borders on cockiness, but none whatsoever about his arm. Pike, at 6'6", has ideal size for a quarterback but not quite the arm strength of Moore or Clausen. He will likely compete with Cantwell for the No. 3 spot. **GRADE: C**

RUNNING BACKS Tailback is the Panthers' best position. Put it this way: DeAngelo Williams was a Pro Bowler last season, and he didn't even lead the team in rushing. That honor fell to Jonathan Stewart by 16 yards, but both backs had great seasons. They each rushed for more than 1,100 yards — the first time two backs from the same NFL team have ever done that. Stewart is the pile-driver who runs through people but still has enough burst for big gains. Williams is a powerful scatback who excels at turning the corner. Fox likes to rotate the two almost evenly to keep them fresh, but either one is strong enough to carry the ball 30 times if necessary. Tony Fiammetta has basically been handed the fullback job over popular mainstay Brad Hoover in a cost-cutting move. The Panthers' fullback rarely does anything but block, and Fiammetta has the size to do that. **GRADE: A**

RECEIVERS Smith said in the offseason he would like to be a No. 2 receiver this year — that if the Panthers grabbed a new No. 1 receiver and he didn't have to get double-teamed all the time, he would welcome that. Fat chance. Smith, 31, is No. 1 until proven otherwise. He didn't have many big plays in 2009, but he still led the team in receiving yards (982). Smith might have lost a step but remains faster and more elusive than most NFL receivers. But who will be the No. 2 guy? Rookie Brandon LaFell, a third-round pick from LSU, could have the inside track. LaFell is not a burner but is strong. Dwayne Jarrett could also be a factor in the race, although he has been a great disappointment in his three NFL seasons. Kenny Moore has good hands but is a possession type. Armanti Edwards, another rookie third-rounder, will be switched from his college quarterback position to receiver and will be very raw and athletic. At tight end, the Panthers employ the three-headed monster of Jeff King, Dante Rosario and Gary Barnidge. King is slow but a steadier blocker, while Barnidge and Rosario both can occasionally get deep over the middle. **GRADE: C+**

Williams, Smith: Bruce Schwartzman

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

The Other Futbol Wide receiver Steve Smith has taken an avid interest in "futbol" — i.e., soccer — prompted by his kids. He has even attended some soccer games overseas. A fan of many sports, Smith also attended the 2010 Australian Open and sat in the player's box for North Carolinian John Isner.

Confident Clausen Don't ever say Jimmy Clausen lacks confidence. As a high schooler, he showed up for his Notre Dame selection announcement in a Hummer stretch limo. Then, when drafted by the Panthers at No. 48 overall, he said: "I just want to tell you you just made the best pick in the draft and I'm going to make you guys proud."

Double Trouble While DeAngelo Williams and Jonathan Stewart split the carries at running back, there seems to be no professional jealousy whatsoever. In fact, the two are close friends and have attended several pro wrestling matches together.

The Beast Middle linebacker Jon Beason has had a grudge ever since December, when he wasn't named to the NFC Pro Bowl after making it in 2008. He eventually played in the game anyway, making the squad as an alternate, but that didn't pacify him. Expect Beason, who always has a good motor, to be even more energized this season after the snub.

2009 STATS

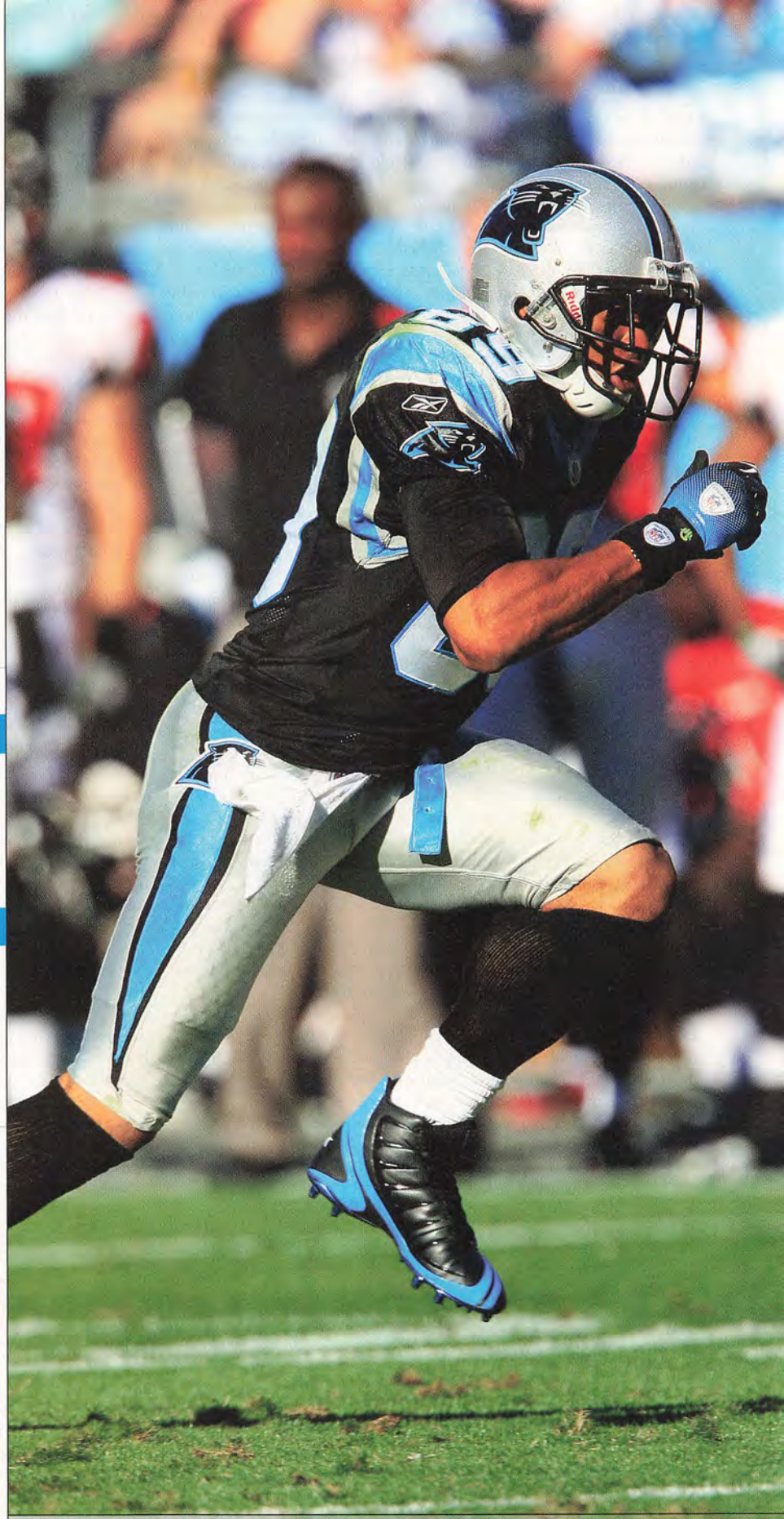
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	331.1	19	9
Rushing	156.1	3	1
Passing	174.9	27	15
Scoring	19.7	21	11
Punt Returns	8.3	T16	T9
Kick Returns	19.9	31	16
Red Zone TD %	50.0	T18	10

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	315.8	8	3
Rushing	124.8	22	12
Passing	191.0	4	1
Scoring	19.2	9	4
Interceptions	22	T5	4
Sacks	31	T23	11
Turnover Differential	+6	T8	T5

SCOUTING THE PANTHERS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP CAROLINA

"Matt Moore is unproven. He showed some good things last year, but if the Panthers really loved Moore, they wouldn't have invested draft picks on Jimmy Clausen and Tony Pike. Defenses are going to continue to gang the line of scrimmage until the Panthers' passing attack makes them pay. … Let's face it, Charlie Weis is a fantastic coach, and having been under his tutelage, I'd say Jimmy Clausen is definitely pro-ready. I'm never happy to see who we determine as being a very good potential prospect in this league going to a team in our division. … With Julius Peppers gone, who's going to pressure the quarterback on this team? Everette Brown was a big disappointment as a rookie. He's undersized and his technique needs a lot of work. He's only had one season, but he didn't show much last year to change my opinion on him."



PANTHERS WR STEVE SMITH

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The gems of this group are center Ryan Kalil and left tackle Jordan Gross. Both have won all-league recognition of various types. Gross returns in 2010 after a broken right tibia and fibula ended his year prematurely last November, but his rehab has gone well. As the most athletic lineman on the team, he should be fine protecting the quarterback's blind side. Kalil is a bit undersized but very smart and makes great blocking adjustments at the line. Right tackle Jeff Otah (6'6", 330) is a behemoth who played a key role as Carolina set a team record with 2,498 rushing yards in 2009. He is coming back from a knee injury suffered in December. Travelle Wharton normally starts at left guard and will return there this season but can play either tackle position if necessary. The new right guard will likely be Mackenzy Bernadeau, who played well in seven games as a spot starter last season. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Panthers' most gaping holes are here. In Peppers, the Panthers lost a perennial Pro Bowler and the most effective pass-rusher in team history. Only one of Carolina's four starters from 2009 will return — end Tyler Brayton, whose presence runs counter to the youth movement on the rest of the defense. Brayton was kept because he came relatively cheap and he's a smart player who is decent at everything. There will be much pressure on Everette Brown, the second-year player who cost the Panthers a first-round draft pick to acquire. Still well undersized for an end at 256 pounds, Brown has shown some speed-rushing skills but too often gets overpowered while playing the run. Charles Johnson, who is a bit stouter, might beat out Brown. The tackles will be new. Tank Tyler and Louis Leonard are 300-plus pounders who both played well but sparingly due to injury in 2009. Ed Johnson, formerly of Indianapolis, could be a factor as well. **GRADE: C-**

LINEBACKERS The Panthers believe they have two of the best young linebackers working today in Jon Beason and Thomas Davis. Beason's speed allows him to get everywhere, and though only 25, he's also the team's acknowledged defensive leader. Davis is just as fast as Beason and a better pass-rusher. A likely Pro Bowl season for Davis was short-circuited due to knee injury. Dan Connor, who is mostly a run-stuffer, will likely be the third starter, and James Anderson and rookie Eric Norwood (a fine blitzer and special-teamer) are the primary backups. The Panthers also got Jamar Williams, a backup in Chicago, in an April trade. He should contribute on special teams and might even have a chance to unseat Connor. **GRADE: A-**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Cornerbacks Chris Gamble and Richard Marshall have good (but not great) ballhawking skills and tied for the team lead in interceptions last season with four. Teams target Marshall more frequently than Gamble, but it's close. Free safety Charles Godfrey might move to the strong side; he sometimes gets beaten deep but is improving. Versatile second-year man Sherrod Martin had three interceptions in part-time duty as a rookie and can play every position in the secondary decently. He moves into a starting role at safety following the trade of starter Chris Harris in April. Nickel corner Captain Munnerlyn is only 5'8" but has a tough streak. **GRADE: B-**

SPECIALISTS Kicker John Kasay, the last original Panther from the 1995 expansion club, is 40 and still automatic from 40 yards and in. Fox loves him. To save the wear on Kasay's leg, kickoff duties will likely be assumed by Todd Carter. Punter Jason Baker is consistent. New special teams coordinator Jeff Rodgers must figure out where to find the Panthers some help in the return game. Tyrell Sutton shows some promise on kickoffs. Munnerlyn was an average punt returner last season, and the Panthers will look hard in training camp to see if anyone can beat him out. Edwards, the former Appalachian State quarterback, would seem the most likely candidate. **GRADE: C**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Panthers won't be expected to do much given the way they purged their team of well-known veterans in the offseason. They will rely on their two running backs and their defense to win games and hope that their inexperience at quarterback won't lose games for them. Although Fox enters the last year of his contract, he's good at compartmentalizing, and that won't be as much of a distraction as it might appear. However, he just might not have the horses for the playoffs — unless the Panthers find three to four young players who emerge as standouts at just the right time.

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Aaron Francisco	S	Indianapolis	Jake Delhomme	QB	Cleveland
Marcus Hudson	CB	San Francisco	Na'il Diggs	LB	St. Louis
Ed Johnson	DT	Indianapolis	Chris Harris	SS	Chicago
Jamar Williams	LB	Chicago	Brad Hoover	FB	Free agent
Wallace Wright	WR	N.Y. Jets	Maake Kemoeatu	DT	Washington
			Damione Lewis	DT	New England
			Julius Peppers	DE	Chicago
			Dante Wesley	CB	Detroit

The Panthers went young in the offseason, slicing a number of well-loved or once-loved veterans (Delhomme, Hoover) and several solid starters as well. They may be well positioned to make some moves down the road after dumping all that money, but for now the team skews very young. Carolina would rather not have lost Peppers but never could come to terms with him. The Panthers' signings were mostly second- and third-tier free agents and in large part designed to bolster the special teams. Only Johnson has a shot at starting.

Jim Prisching

CAROLINA IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2. Jimmy Clausen	QB	6-3	222	Notre Dame
3. Brandon LaFell	WR	6-2	211	LSU
3. Armanti Edwards	WR	5-11	187	Appalachian St.
4. Eric Norwood	LB	6-1	245	South Carolina
6. Greg Hardy	DE	6-4	281	Ole Miss
6. David Gettis	WR	6-3	217	Baylor
6. Jordan Pugh	DB	5-11	200	Texas A&M
6. Tony Pike	QB	6-6	223	Cincinnati
7. R.J. Stanford	CB	5-10	180	Utah
7. Robert McClain	CB	5-9	195	Connecticut

With the first three picks devoted to offense, Carolina is trying to shore up an anemic passing attack that was No. 27 in the NFL in 2009. Matt Moore might have thought he got the keys to the Panther offense when Carolina released Jake Delhomme, but it won't be easy. Now he must beat out Clausen in training camp. Pike will more likely be the No. 3 quarterback. LaFell could have the biggest chance for immediate impact because Carolina has an enormous hole at the No. 2 receiving spot. Edwards is a wonderful all-around athlete and might contribute as a returner and slot receiver. Norwood is a pass-rushing linebacker who could line up as an end on passing downs.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Cantwell, Hunter	QB	6-4	236	1	Louisville	FA-09	FA-Car-09
3 Moore, Matt	QB	6-3	202	3	Oregon State	W-Dal-07	FA-Dal-07
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
42 Fiammetta, Tony	FB	6-0	242	1	Syracuse	D4a-09	D4a-Car-09
33 Goodson, Mike	RB	6-0	212	1	Texas A&M	D4b-09	D4b-Car-09
28 Stewart, Jonathan	RB	5-10	235	2	Oregon	D1a-08	D1a-Car-08
22 Sutton, Tyrell	RB	5-8	213	1	Northwestern	FA-09	FA-GB-09
34 Williams, DeAngelo	RB	5-9	217	4	Memphis	D1-06	D1-Car-06
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
82 Barnidge, Gary	TE	6-5	247	2	Louisville	D5-08	D5-Car-08
80 Jarrett, Dwayne	WR	6-4	219	3	USC	D2a-07	D2a-Car-07
47 King, Jeff	TE	6-3	260	4	Virginia Tech	D5-06	D5-Car-06
83 Martin, Charly	WR	6-1	212	1	West Texas A&M	FA-09	FA-SD-09
81 Moore, Kenneth	WR	5-11	195	2	Wake Forest	FA-08	D5-Det-08
88 Rosario, Dante	TE	6-4	250	3	Oregon	D5a-07	D5a-Car-07
89 Smith, Steve	WR	5-9	185	9	Utah	D3-01	D3-Car-01
15 Wright, Wallace	WR	6-1	197	4	North Carolina	FA-NYJ-10	FA-NYJ-06
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
73 Bernadeau, Mackenzy	G	6-4	308	2	Bentley	D7c-08	D7c-Car-08
71 Davis, C.J.	G	6-2	308	1	Pittsburgh	FA-09	FA-Car-09
69 Gross, Jordan	T	6-4	305	7	Utah	D1-03	D1-Car-03
67 Kalil, Ryan	C	6-2	295	3	USC	D2b-07	D2b-Car-07
79 Otah, Jeff	T	6-6	330	2	Pittsburgh	D1b-08	D1b-Car-08
72 Robinson, Duke	G	6-5	330	1	Oklahoma	D6-09	D6-Car-09
74 Schwartz, Geoff	T	6-6	331	1	Oregon	D7b-07	D7b-Car-07
70 Wharton, Travelle	G	6-4	312	6	South Carolina	D3-04	D3-Car-04
65 Williams, Garry	T	6-3	296	1	Kentucky	FA-09	FA-Car-09
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
96 Brayton, Tyler	DE	6-6	280	7	Colorado	FA-Oak-08	D1-Oak-03
91 Brown, Everette	DE	6-1	256	1	Florida State	D2a-09	D2a-Car-09
98 Hayden, Nick	DT	6-4	292	2	Wisconsin	D6-08	D6-Car-08
60 Irvin, Corvey	DT	6-3	302	1	Georgia	D3-09	D3-Car-09
95 Johnson, Charles	DE	6-2	275	3	Georgia	D3-07	D3-Car-07
Johnson, Ed	DT	6-2	296	3	Penn State	FA-10	FA-Ind-07
94 Leonard, Louis	DT	6-4	325	3	Fresno State	T-Cle-09	FA-SD-07
66 Taylor, Hilee	DE	6-2	250	2	North Carolina	D7a-08	D7a-Car-08
93 Tyler, Tank	DT	6-2	306	3	NC State	FA-09	D3-KC-07
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
50 Anderson, James	LB	6-2	235	4	Virginia Tech	D3a-06	D3a-Car-06
52 Beason, Jon	LB	6-0	237	3	Miami	D1-07	D1-Car-07
55 Connor, Dan	LB	6-2	231	2	Penn State	D3b-08	D3b-Car-08
58 Davis, Thomas	LB	6-0	240	5	Georgia	D1-05	D1-Car-05
54 Ivy, Mortty	LB	6-1	239	1	West Virginia	FA-09	FA-Car-09
53 Williams, Jamar	LB	6-0	237	4	Arizona State	T-Chi-10	D4-Chi-06
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
21 Francisco, Aaron	S	6-2	207	6	BYU	FA-Ind-10	FA-Ari-05
20 Gamble, Chris	CB	6-1	200	6	Ohio State	D1-04	D1-Car-04
30 Godfrey, Charles	S	5-11	205	2	Iowa	D3a-08	D3a-Car-08
25 Hudson, Marcus	CB	6-2	200	4	NC State	FA-SF-10	D6b-SF-06
31 Marshall, Richard	CB	5-11	189	4	Fresno State	D2-06	D2-Car-06
23 Martin, Sherrod	S	6-1	198	1	Troy	D2b-09	D2b-Car-09
41 Munnerlyn, Captain	CB	5-8	186	1	South Carolina	D7-09	D7-Car-09
27 Wilson, C.J.	CB	6-1	195	3	Baylor	D7-07	D7-Car-07
32 Witherspoon, Brian	CB	5-10	180	2	Stillman	FA-Det-10	FA-Jac-08
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
7 Baker, Jason	P	6-2	205	9	Iowa	T-Den-05	FA-Phi-01
5 Carter, Todd	K	6-1	190	0	Grand Valley State	FA-10	FA-Car-10
44 Jansen, J.J.	LS	6-2	256	2	Notre Dame	T-GB-09	FA-GB-08
4 Kasay, John	K	5-10	210	19	Georgia	FA-Sea-95	D4-Sea-91

Bruce Schwartzman

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	89	Steve Smith
	81	Kenneth Moore
WR	80	Dwayne Jarrett
	11	Brandon LaFell (R)
LT	69	Jordan Gross
	70	Travelle Wharton
LG	70	Travelle Wharton
	72	Duke Robinson
C	67	Ryan Kalil
	63	Steve Justice
RG	73	Mackenzy Bernadeau
	71	C.J. Davis
RT	79	Jeff Otah
	74	Geoff Schwartz
TE	47	Jeff King
	88	Dante Rosario
QB	3	Matt Moore
	2	Jimmy Clausen (R)
FB	42	Tony Fiammetta
	82	Gary Barnidge
RB	34	DeAngelo Williams
	28	Jonathan Stewart

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
LDE	96	Tyler Brayton
	76	Greg Hardy (R)
LDT	93	Tank Tyler
	99	Ed Johnson
RDT	94	Louis Leonard
	60	Corvey Irvin
RDE	91	Everette Brown
	95	Charles Johnson
SLB	55	Dan Connor
	92	Eric Norwood (R)
MLB	52	Jon Beason
	54	Mortty Ivy
WLB	58	Thomas Davis
	50	James Anderson
CB	20	Chris Gamble
	27	C.J. Wilson
CB	31	Richard Marshall
	41	Captain Munnerlyn
SS	23	Sherrod Martin
	21	Aaron Francisco
FS	30	Charles Godfrey
	29	Jordan Pugh (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	4	John Kasay
KR	22	Tyrell Sutton
P	7	Jason Baker
PR	41	Captain Munnerlyn

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: John Fox
Offensive Coordinator: Jeff Davidson
Defensive Coordinator: Ron Meeks
Special Teams: Jeff Rodgers
Assistant Special Teams: Sam Garnes
Quarterbacks: Rip Scherer
Asst. Head Coach/Running Backs: Jim Skipper
Wide Receivers: Tyke Tolbert
Tight Ends: Geep Chryst
Offensive Line: Dave Magazu
Defensive Line: Brian Baker
Linebackers: Richard Smith
Secondary: Mike Gillhamer
Secondary: Ron Milus
Defensive Quality Control: Sam Mills III
Strength and Conditioning: Jerry Simmons

FANTASY FLASH

Thanks to **Jonathan Stewart's** 440 yards rushing over the final three weeks last season, Stewart and DeAngelo Williams became the sixth pair of teammates in NFL history to rush for 1,000 yards in the same season. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.

2009 RESULTS *(8–8)*

Sept. 13	Philadelphia	L	10–38
Sept. 20	at Atlanta	L	20–28
Sept. 28	at Dallas	L	7–21
Oct. 11	Washington	W	20–17
Oct. 18	at Tampa Bay	W	28–21
Oct. 25	Buffalo	L	9–20
Nov. 1	at Arizona	W	34–21
Nov. 8	at New Orleans	L	20–30
Nov. 15	Atlanta	W	28–19
Nov. 19	Miami	L	17–24
Nov. 29	at N.Y. Jets	L	6–17
Dec. 6	Tampa Bay	W	16– 6
Dec. 13	at New England	L	10–20
Dec. 20	Minnesota	W	26– 7
Dec. 27	at N.Y. Giants	W	41– 9
Jan. 3	New Orleans	W	23–10

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at N.Y. Giants	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at New Orleans	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Chicago	1:00 pm
Week 6	BYE	
Oct. 24	San Francisco	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at St. Louis	1:00 pm
Nov. 7	New Orleans	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	Baltimore	1:00 pm
Nov. 28	at Cleveland	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	at Seattle	4:15 pm
Dec. 12	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Arizona	1:00 pm
Dec. 23	at Pittsburgh (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Jan. 2	at Atlanta	1:00 pm

new orleans SAINTS

1 NFC SOUTH FORECAST

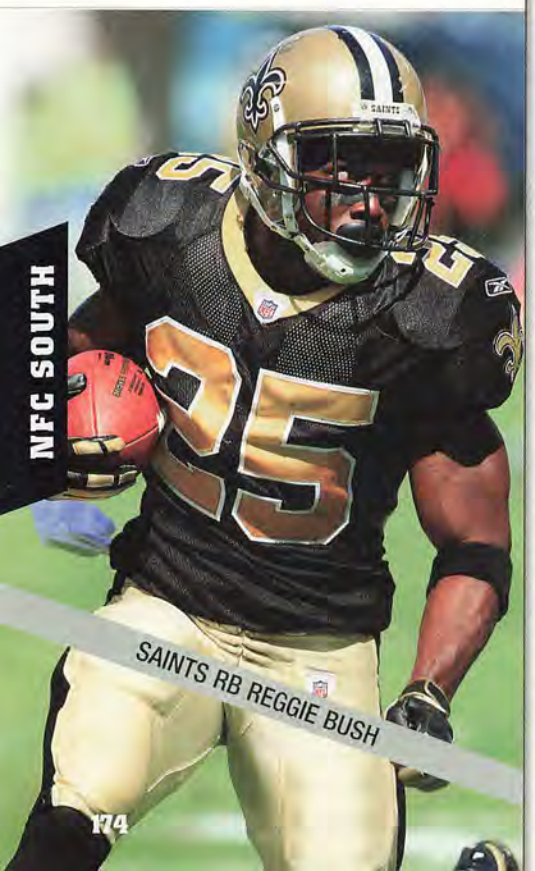
NEW ORLEANS

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Tom Benson
GENERAL MANAGER: Mickey Loomis
STADIUM: Louisiana Superdome (69,703)
SURFACE: FieldTurf
WEBSITE: www.neworleanssaints.com
TICKETS: 504-731-1700
TRAINING CAMP: Saints Training Facility (Metairie, La.)

Five-Year Win Trend

Super Bowl Champion PLAYOFFS Playoffs



SAINTS RB REGGIE BUSH

It took 43 years for the Saints to win their first Super Bowl, and when they finally did it last season, the celebration in New Orleans lasted well into the offseason. Now the challenge is to try to recapture the magic and momentum from the cathartic run. That shouldn't be an issue with the driven and hyper-competitive Sean Payton and Drew Brees around. Payton and Brees form the most potent coach-player battery in the league. Their take-no-prisoners philosophy and playing style have transformed the culture of the once-forlorn franchise and made New Orleans a destination organization for players and coaches. Brees is playing quarterback as well as anyone has played the position, and Payton continues to push all the right buttons while overseeing one of the great rebuilding jobs in league history.

The Saints' roster is loaded with players in their primes and shows no signs of slowing down. The task, of course, will be more difficult this season. The Saints will not sneak up on anyone. But the talent, coaching and attitude are there to make another deep playoff run.

COACHES As evidenced by his successful onside kick call in Super Bowl XLIV, Payton is not afraid to be unconventional. His aggressive approach to playcalling sometimes gets him in trouble, but more often than not he's successful at dictating the pace and terms of the game. Moreover, his aggressive mentality breeds confidence in his players. As an offensive playcaller, Payton is a master at isolating mismatches and attacking an opponent's weakness. Few offensive minds in the league are as detail-oriented. Equally important, he has deftly managed to keep his roster full of offensive skill-position players happy and team-oriented despite their relatively modest production. In defensive coordinator Gregg Williams, Payton found the right man to overhaul his defense and change the unit's attitude. Like Payton, the cocksure Williams instills a swagger in players with his aggressive attacking scheme. He likes to crowd the box on early downs and force the opposing quarterback into obvious passing situations, where he can come after him with a dizzying array of blitzes and stunts. Eventually, Williams feels the mental pressure and physical pounding will take their toll and lead to a mistake or game-changing turnover. Under Williams, the Saints improved dramatically in giveaway-takeway ratio. That will need to continue if the Saints are to defend their title. ***GRADE: A***

QUARTERBACKS Brees is one of the few elite quarterbacks in the league capable of carrying a team on his back and dominating games. Other than his 6'0" height, he's the complete package: competitive, smart, talented, durable, athletic and driven. One of the most accurate quarterbacks in NFL history, he has mastered Payton's complex attack and has the complete confidence of the coaching staff and teammates to make checks at the line of scrimmage. His ability to decipher the defense and deliver the ball quickly to the open receiver are rivaled only by Peyton Manning. Moreover, Brees sets the tone in the huddle and locker room with his leadership and tireless work ethic. The Saints have little experience behind Brees, so he needs to stay healthy. They are expected to sign a veteran backup before the season starts to replace Mark Brunell. Second-year pro Chase Daniel, who put up huge numbers at Missouri, and rookie Sean Canfield, a southpaw from Oregon State, are unproven. ***GRADE: A***

RUNNING BACKS Reggie Bush, Pierre Thomas and Lynell Hamilton aren't going to earn many Pro Bowl votes, but together they make for an effective backfield combination. Bush is the satellite back. He enjoyed the best season of his four-year career a year ago and finally seems to have learned how to run effectively at the NFL level. He's still too small to carry the ball more than a handful of times per game, but Payton has learned to use him effectively as a check-down receiver and split wide, where his speed and elusiveness make him a big-play threat. Bush gets the hype, but Thomas gets the ball in crunch time. He isn't particularly big or fast, but he runs with tremendous balance, body lean and vision. He rarely takes a big hit or is knocked backward. In 2009, he rushed for 793 yards and six touchdown on 147 carries and added 39 receptions for 302 yards and two more scores. Hamilton, who carried the ball only 35 times last season, will assume the short-yardage role manned by the departed Mike Bell. Fullback Heath Evans is a question mark while coming off a season-ending knee injury. ***GRADE: B***

RECEIVERS The Saints have a little bit of everything in their deep, talented receiving corps. Marques Colston is the clear go-to guy. He's not the fastest guy in the world, but he has tremendous body control and great hands, allowing him to expertly adjust and snare Brees' back-shoulder throws on the run. Devery Henderson and Robert Meachem are the deep threats. Henderson has emerged as a bona fide starter, and Meachem blossomed into a big-play threat in his third season. Lance Moore is the slot receiver and one of Brees' favorite targets on third down. He's looking to rebound after an injury-plagued 2009 season. Tight ends Jeremy Shockey

Bush, Brees: Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Jaw Jack City Teammates nicknamed defensive lineman Anthony Hargrove "Jawbone" for his loquaciousness. Hargrove is so talkative, defensive coordinator Gregg Williams imposed a daily one-question limit to Hargrove in order to keep meetings on schedule. It's all in good fun.

All in the Family Williams' favorite defender isn't Hargrove, Jonathan Vilma or Will Smith. It's his youngest son, Chase, a freshman outside linebacker/tight end at Virginia Tech. Williams loves to talk, and there's nothing he loves to talk about more than his son's exploits on the field. Williams' oldest son, Blake, was a top-notch cornerback at Princeton and is in his second season as an offensive coaching assistant with the Saints. Blake's addition to the staff was a tipping point when Williams was being courted for the Saints' coordinator position in early 2009.

Unsung Heroes Williams raves about the technical expertise of linebackers coach Joe Vitt. And coach Sean Payton thinks so highly of Vitt's motivational skills, he allows the veteran assistant to speak to the team the night before games. Vitt consistently earns high marks for his dry wit.

2009 STATS

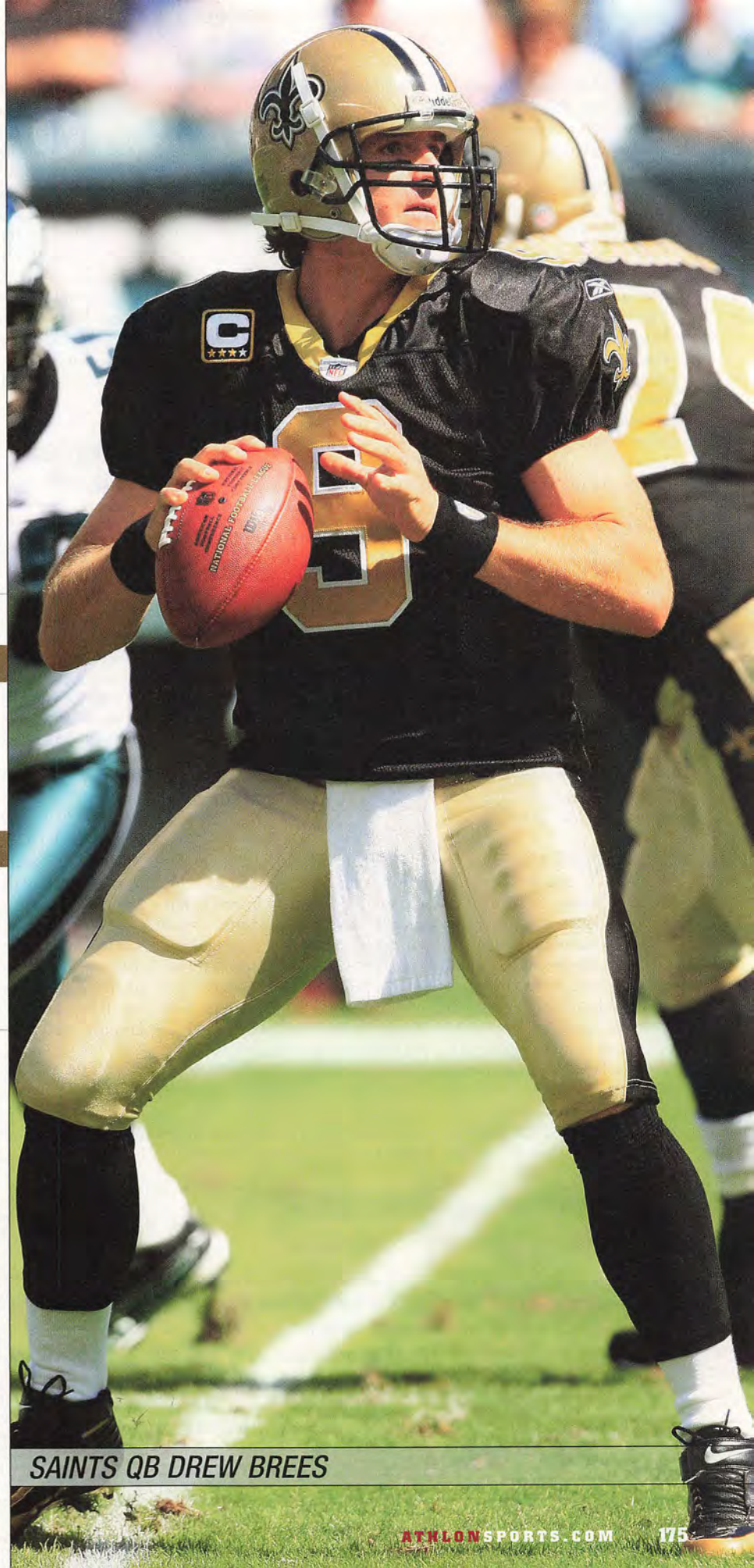
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	403.8	1	1
Rushing	131.6	6	2
Passing	272.2	4	1
Scoring	31.9	1	1
Punt Returns	4.6	31	15
Kick Returns	24.4	T4	3
Red Zone TD %	57.7	6	4

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	357.8	25	13
Rushing	122.2	21	11
Passing	235.6	26	13
Scoring	21.3	20	10
Interceptions	26	3	2
Sacks	35	T13	T8
Turnover Differential	+11	3	3

SCOUTING THE SAINTS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP NEW ORLEANS

"I don't think they are as talented at receiver as what people might think. Marques Colston is a good solid player, but to me, he's a (No.) 3 (receiver) or, at best, a 2. The Saints' receivers are difficult to grade because of Drew Brees and the system they are in. Individually, they aren't that talented. … The Saints could use a veteran backup quarterback. But it's a tough position to fill because Brees doesn't get hit or injured. You almost have to get a guy who is at the end of his career. … Darren Sharper is a good player, but he's getting up there in age and is going to have to heal his bruised ego. He wanted to get one last big contract, but he found it wasn't quite as fruitful as he thought. … With the return of Reggie Bush, it's not like they really needed another playmaker on offense, but they certainly added another in Jimmy Graham. Hard to believe, but the Saints may very well be improved on the offensive side of the ball."



SAINTS QB DREW BREES

and David Thomas combined to grab 83 passes for 925 yards and four touchdowns. Shockey isn't a dominant player at this stage of his career, but he's still a reliable target over the middle and down the seams of Cover 2 defenses. ***GRADE: B+***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The most underrated aspect of the Saints' high-powered offense is its smart, durable front five. Guards Jahri Evans and Carl Nicks are the strength of the unit. They are smart, tough and physically imposing. Center Jonathan Goodwin parlayed his precise techniques and intelligence into his first Pro Bowl invitation. The Saints have four tackles capable of starting and playing at a high level. Left tackle Jammal Brown is the most talented of the bunch, but he's coming off a season-ending hip injury. He's the enforcer up front, a tough, take-no-prisoners warrior who irks Payton with occasional mental errors. Right tackle Jon Stinchcomb is the leader of the unit. He's more of a finesse blocker at this stage of his career, but he is athletic enough to fan rushers wide in the Saints' pass protection scheme and pick off defenders in space on screen and swing passes. Jermon Bushrod started in place of Brown last season and played well enough for the Saints to shop Brown around the league during the offseason. Zach Strief can swing to either tackle spot and works as the team's third tight end on run downs. ***GRADE: A***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Saints don't have any superstars up front, but they compensate with a solid group of savvy, productive veterans. Right end Will Smith is the leader. He's a bit undersized but plays with a nonstop motor and does not quit on plays. Free agents Alex Brown and Jimmy Wilkerson were signed to replace Charles Grant at left end. They'll platoon, with Wilkerson working the early downs, then yielding to Brown in passing situations. Bobby McCray provides speed off the edge. Sedrick Ellis hasn't set the world on fire in two seasons as a starting tackle. He's more solid than spectacular. Anthony Hargrove is a former end who is just now getting comfortable inside. He struggles to keep blockers from cutting his legs out from under him. Remi Ayodele and rookie Al Woods will be called on to hold down the point of attack inside. ***GRADE: B-***

LINEBACKERS Middle linebacker Jonathan Vilma quarterbacks the defense and is at his best making plays sideline to sideline with his speed and range. He's undersized and can get caught up in traffic, but he makes up for it with playmaking skills. Veteran Scott Shanle is solid if unspectacular on the weak side. He can cover a back or tight end out of the backfield and is a solid tackler, but isn't explosive or powerful enough to be an effective pass-rusher in Williams' blitz packages. Jo-Lonn Dunbar, Troy Evans, Jonathan Casillas and Stanley Arnoux will have first crack at the starting strong-side job vacated by Scott Fujita. All three are a bit undersized for the position, but Williams insists he won't be beholden to positions and will play his three best linebackers. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Super Bowl hero Tracy Porter and Jabari Greer form one of the best 1-2 corner tandems in the league. Both are speedy, athletic and excellent in man-to-man coverage. As they go, so goes the whole defense. When they are healthy, Williams is free to dial up his aggressive pressure packages without fear of being burned for the big play. Malcolm Jenkins impressed the coaches with his instincts and playmaking ability before an ankle injury derailed his rookie season. He has the size to be a factor in the slot or at free safety if the coaches choose to move him. Strong safety Roman Harper is a big hitter who makes plays in run support or as a blitzer from the second level. Veteran Randall Gay and rookie Patrick Robinson give the Saints quality depth at corner. Free safety Darren Sharper enjoyed a career renaissance at age 34, grabbing nine interceptions and returning three for scores. With the corners locking down their men outside, Sharper can roam the middle and make plays on the ball. The Saints have excellent safety depth with veteran Pierson Prioleau, converted corner Usama Young, versatile Chris Reis and unproven Chip Vaughn. ***GRADE: A***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Alex Brown	DE	Chicago	Mike Bell	RB	Philadelphia
Jimmy Wilkerson	DE	Tampa Bay	Scott Fujita	LB	Cleveland
			Charles Grant	DE	Free agent

The most significant move involving a veteran player was the re-signing of safety Darren Sharper, whose instincts, savvy and ball skills make him the perfect center fielder in Gregg Williams' defense. The team's other moves were fairly incidental. Brown and Wilkerson will platoon at left end and should effectively replace Grant, whose production plummeted in recent years. Brown is a solid pass-rusher who should provide more explosiveness off the edge than Grant. Fujita will be missed at strong-side linebacker. The Saints have enough quality backs that as long as they're healthy, the loss of Bell won't hurt.

SPECIALISTS As he proved with his game-winning kick in the NFC Championship Game, kicker Garrett Hartley doesn't get rattled in the clutch. His powerful leg is accurate from 50 yards and in. For the season, he hit nine of his 11 attempts. Punter Thomas Morstead has a strong leg but struggled with inconsistency. He was an asset on kickoffs, where he ranked among the league leaders in touchbacks. Bush will look to rebound from a subpar year on punt returns, but there's no denying his big-play potential. Courtney Roby is solid on kickoff returns, where his straight-line speed makes him a threat to go all the way if he can break the initial wave of defenders. Coverage units must improve. ***GRADE: B***

FINAL ANALYSIS Returning almost every starter from their Super Bowl championship team, the Saints are primed for another deep playoff run. And as long as Brees is healthy and under center, they should remain a Super Bowl contender for the near future. This is not a one-hit wonder.

Ric Fogel

NEW ORLEANS IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Patrick Robinson	CB	5-11	190	Florida State
2. Charles Brown	T	6-5	301	USC
3. Jimmy Graham	TE	6-6	260	Miami
4. Al Woods	DT	6-4	309	LSU
5. Matt Tennant	C	6-5	300	Boston College
7. Sean Canfield	QB	6-4	223	Oregon State

Because their roster is loaded with depth and talent, the Super Bowl champs could afford to invest in developmental prospects such as Brown and Graham. Robinson adds depth to a loaded secondary. He'll make an immediate contribution on special teams, and his strong man-to-man skills are a good fit for Gregg Williams' aggressive scheme. Brown will eventually replace Jammal Brown at left tackle. Graham is a freakish athlete whom Sean Payton fell in love with during the scouting process. The Saints think Graham, a former basketball standout, compares favorably to Antonio Gates.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Brees, Drew	QB	6-0	209	9	Purdue	FA-SD-06	D2-SD-01
10 Daniel, Chase	QB	6-0	225	1	Missouri	FA-09	FA-Was-09

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25 Bush, Reggie	RB	6-0	203	4	USC	D1-06	D1-NO-06
44 Evans, Heath	FB	6-0	250	9	Auburn	FA-NE-09	D2-Sea-01
30 Hamilton, Lynell	RB	6-0	235	1	San Diego State	FA-08	FA-NO-08
Hill, P.J.	RB	5-10	225	1	Wisconsin	W-Was-10	FA-NO-09
Keasey, Zak	FB	6-0	235	3	Princeton	FA-10	FA-Was-05
46 Mailei, Marcus	FB	6-0	255	1	Weber State	PS-Phi-09	FA-Phi-09
23 Thomas, Pierre	RB	5-11	215	3	Illinois	FA-07	FA-NO-07

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
87 Arrington, Adrian	WR	6-3	192	2	Michigan	D7-08	D7-NO-08
12 Colston, Marques	WR	6-4	225	4	Hofstra	D7b-06	D7b-NO-06
13 Harper, Rod	WR	6-0	209	1	Murray State	FA-09	FA-GB-08
19 Henderson, Devery	WR	5-11	200	6	LSU	D2a-04	D2a-NO-04
84 Humphrey, Tory	TE	6-2	255	4	Central Michigan	FA-09	FA-Ind-05
82 Lorenzen, Tyler	TE	6-5	229	1	Connecticut	FA-09	FA-Jac-09
17 Meachem, Robert	WR	6-2	210	3	Tennessee	D1-07	D1-NO-07
16 Moore, Lance	WR	5-9	190	4	Toledo	FA-07	FA-Cle-05
15 Roby, Courtney	WR	6-0	189	4	Indiana	FA-09	D3-Ten-05
88 Shockey, Jeremy	TE	6-5	251	8	Miami	T-NYG-08	D1-NYG-02
85 Thomas, David	TE	6-3	248	4	Texas	T-NE-09	D3-NE-06

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70 Brown, Jammal	T	6-6	313	5	Oklahoma	D1-05	D1-NO-05
74 Bushrod, Jermon	T	6-5	315	3	Towson	D4b-07	D4b-NO-07
72 Duckworth, Tim	G	6-4	318	1	Auburn	FA-09	FA-Den-07
73 Evans, Jahri	G	6-4	318	4	Bloomsburg	D4-06	D4-NO-06
70 Goddard, Na'Shan	T	6-5	315	3	South Carolina	FA-09	FA-NYG-06
76 Goodwin, Jonathan	C	6-3	318	8	Michigan	FA-NYJ-06	D5-NYJ-02
60 Leckey, Nick	C	6-3	291	6	Kansas State	FA-StL-09	D6-Ari-04
67 Nesbit, Jamar	G	6-4	328	11	South Carolina	FA-Jac-04	FA-Car-99
77 Nicks, Carl	G	6-5	343	2	Nebraska	D5b-08	D5b-NO-08
79 Parnell, Jermey	T	6-6	278	1	Ole Miss	FA-09	FA-NO-09
78 Stinchcomb, Jon	T	6-5	315	7	Georgia	D2-03	D2-NO-03
64 Strief, Zach	T	6-7	320	4	Northwestern	D7a-06	D7a-NO-06

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
92 Ayodele, Remi	DT	6-2	318	3	Oklahoma	FA-08	FA-NE-06
96 Brown, Alex	DE	6-3	260	8	Florida	FA-Chi-10	D4-Chi-02
97 Charleston, Jeff	DE	6-4	265	3	Idaho State	FA-08	FA-Hou-06
98 Ellis, Sedrick	DT	6-1	307	2	USC	D1-08	D1-NO-08
69 Hargrove, Anthony	DT	6-3	272	5	Georgia Tech	FA-Buf-09	D3-StL-04
66 Heyman, Earl	DT	6-1	289	1	Louisville	FA-09	FA-NO-09
95 Leisle, Rodney	DT	6-3	315	4	UCLA	FA-09	D4-NO-04
93 McCray, Bobby	DE	6-6	260	6	Florida	FA-Jac-08	D7-Jac-04
90 Pressley, DeMario	DT	6-3	301	2	NC State	D5a-08	D5a-NO-08
91 Smith, Will	DE	6-3	282	6	Ohio State	D1-04	D1-NO-04
99 Wilkerson, Jimmy	DE	6-2	270	7	Oklahoma	FA-TB-10	D6-KC-03

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99 Arnoux, Stanley	LB	6-0	232	1	Wake Forest	D4b-09	D4b-NO-09
52 Casillas, Jonathan	LB	6-1	227	1	Wisconsin	FA-09	FA-NO-09
56 Dunbar, Jo-Lonn	LB	6-0	226	2	Boston College	FA-08	FA-NO-08
54 Evans, Troy	LB	6-3	238	8	Cincinnati	FA-Hou-07	FA-StL-01
50 Mitchell, Marvin	LB	6-3	249	3	Tennessee	D7-07	D7-NO-07
58 Shanle, Scott	LB	6-2	245	7	Nebraska	T-Dal-06	D7-StL-03
51 Vilma, Jonathan	LB	6-1	230	6	Miami	T-NYJ-08	D1-NYJ-04
59 Waters, Anthony	LB	6-3	238	3	Clemson	PS-Buf-09	D3-SD-07

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38 Fassitt, Greg	CB	5-11	186	1	Grambling State	FA-09	FA-Chi-07
20 Gay, Randall	CB	5-11	190	6	Louisiana State	FA-NE-08	FA-NE-04
32 Greer, Jabari	CB	5-11	180	6	Tennessee	FA-Buf-09	FA-Buf-04
41 Harper, Roman	S	6-1	200	4	Alabama	D2-06	D2-NO-06
27 Jenkins, Malcolm	CB	6-0	204	1	Ohio State	D1-09	D1-NO-09
35 Jones, Reggie	CB	6-0	193	1	Portland State	FA-09	FA-NO-09
22 Porter, Tracy	CB	5-11	186	2	Indiana	D2-08	D2-NO-08
31 Prioleau, Pierson	S	5-11	188	11	Virginia Tech	FA-Jac-09	D4-SF-99
39 Reis, Chris	S	6-1	215	3	Georgia Tech	FA-07	FA-Atl-06
42 Sharper, Darren	S	6-2	210	13	William & Mary	FA-Min-09	D2-GB-97
24 Torrence, Leigh	CB	5-11	179	4	Stanford	W-Was-08	FA-GB-05
37 Vaughn, Chip	S	6-2	221	1	Wake Forest	D4a-09	D4a-NO-09
28 Young, Usama	S	6-0	200	3	Kent State	D3a-07	D3a-NO-07

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Hartley, Garrett	K	5-8	196	2	Oklahoma	FA-08	FA-Den-08
57 Kyle, Jason	LS	6-3	242	15	Arizona State	FA-09	D4-Sea-95
6 Morstead, Thomas	P	6-4	225	1	SMU	D5-09	D5-NO-09

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	12	Marques Colston
	16	Lance Moore
WR	19	Devery Henderson
	17	Robert Meachem
LT	70	Jammal Brown
	74	Jermon Bushrod
LG	77	Carl Nicks
	72	Tim Duckworth
C	76	Jonathan Goodwin
	65	Matt Tennant (R)
RG	73	Jahri Evans
	75	Na'Shan Goddard
RT	78	Jon Stinchcomb
	64	Zach Strief
TE	88	Jeremy Shockey
	85	David Thomas
QB	9	Drew Brees
	10	Chase Daniel
FB	44	Heath Evans
	45	Zak Keasey
RB	25	Reggie Bush
	23	Pierre Thomas

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	96	Alex Brown
	99	Jimmy Wilkerson
DT	92	Remi Ayodele
	94	Al Woods (R)
DT	98	Sedrick Ellis
	69	Anthony Hargrove
DE	91	Will Smith
	93	Bobby McCray
WLB	58	Scott Shanle
	52	Jonathan Casillas
MLB	51	Jonathan Vilma
	50	Marvin Mitchell
SLB	56	Jo-Lonn Dunbar
	54	Troy Evans
CB	22	Tracy Porter
	34	Patrick Robinson (R)
CB	33	Jabari Greer
	27	Malcolm Jenkins
SS	41	Roman Harper
	21	Chip Vaughn
FS	42	Darren Sharper
	28	Usama Young

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Garrett Hartley
KR	15	Courtney Roby
P	6	Thomas Morstead
PR	25	Reggie Bush

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Sean Payton
Offensive Coordinator: Pete Carmichael Jr.
Defensive Coordinator: Gregg Williams
Special Teams Coordinator: Greg McMahon
Assistant Special Teams: Mike Mallory
Quarterbacks: Joe Lombardi
Running Backs: Bret Ingalls
Wide Receivers: Curtis Johnson
Tight Ends: Terry Malone
Offensive Line/Running Game: Aaron Kromer
Offensive Assistant: Carter Sheridan
Defensive Line: Bill Johnson
Assistant Defensive Line: Travis Jones
Assistant Head Coach/Linebackers: Joe Vitt
Secondary: Dennis Allen
Assistant Secondary: Tony Oden
Head Strength and Conditioning: Dan Dalrymple
Coaching Assistant: Mike Cerullo
Coaching Assistant: Blake Williams

FANTASY FLASH

With nine touchdowns on 45 receptions, wide receiver **Robert Meachem** scored once every five catches in 2009. The previous season, he had three TDs among his 12 catches. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(13–3)*

Sept. 13	Detroit		W	45–27
Sept. 20	at Philadelphia		W	48–22
Sept. 27	at Buffalo		W	27– 7
Oct. 4	N.Y. Jets		W	24–10
Oct. 18	N.Y. Giants		W	48–27
Oct. 25	at Miami		W	46–34
Nov. 2	Atlanta		W	35–27
Nov. 8	Carolina		W	30–20
Nov. 15	at St. Louis		W	28–23
Nov. 22	at Tampa Bay		W	38– 7
Nov. 30	New England		W	38–17
Dec. 6	at Washington	(ot)	W	33–30
Dec. 13	at Atlanta		W	26–23
Dec. 19	Dallas		L	17–24
Dec. 27	Tampa Bay	(ot)	L	17–20
Jan. 3	at Carolina		L	10–23
Postseason				
Jan. 16	Arizona		W	45–14
Jan. 24	Minnesota	(ot)	W	31–28
Feb 7	at Indianapolis		W	31–17

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 9	Minnesota (Thu.)	8:30 pm
Sept. 20	at San Francisco (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Sept. 26	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	Carolina	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Arizona	4:05 pm
Oct. 17	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	Pittsburgh	8:20 pm
Nov. 7	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Week 10	BYE	
Nov. 21	Seattle	4:05 pm
Nov. 25	at Dallas (Thu.)	4:15 pm
Dec. 5	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	St. Louis	4:05 pm
Dec. 19	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Dec. 27	at Atlanta (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Jan. 2	Tampa Bay	1:00 pm

Athlon Sports

tampa bay BUCCANEERS

4 NFC SOUTH FORECAST

TAMPA BAY

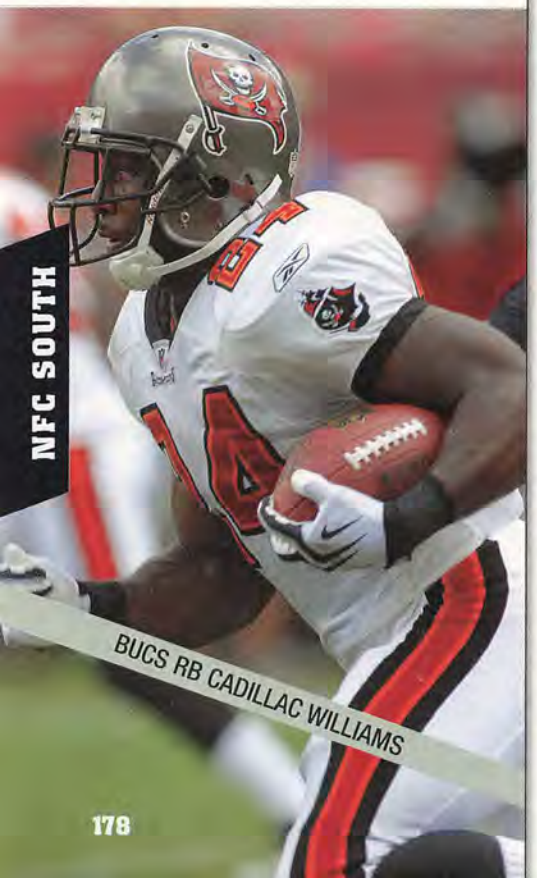
THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: Malcolm Glazer
GENERAL MANAGER: Mark Dominik
STADIUM: Raymond James Stadium (65,000)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.buccaneers.com
TICKETS: 813-879-2827
TRAINING CAMP: One Buccaneer Place (Tampa, Fla.)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	11	PLAYOFFS
2006	4	
2007	9	PLAYOFFS
2008	9	
2009	3	

PLAYOFFS Playoffs



NFC SOUTH

BUCS RB CADILLAC WILLIAMS

When Gerald McCoy was 14, he was a fan of the Buccaneers and their dominating defensive tackle Warren Sapp. So much so that when the Bucs were beating the Raiders in Super Bowl XXXVII, he and the pastor's son were sneaking out of Sunday night church service to get scoring updates. How ironic. Now it's the drafting of McCoy, a defensive tackle from Oklahoma, with the third overall pick that gives the Bucs a prayer of restoring their once-proud defense and competing in the NFC South. In fact, McCoy, who has been asked to fill the enormous shoes left by Sapp at the 3-technique years ago, believes some divine intervention was involved.

"When was the last time Tampa picked that high (third overall)? That is why I said it has to be God-given," McCoy says. "And then they are looking for a 3-technique. It just worked out."

The Bucs are also counting on quarterback Josh Freeman to grow up quickly. Freeman showed flashes of brilliance as a rookie but needs to make better decisions with the ball after throwing 10 touchdowns and 18 interceptions in nine starts.

One thing is certain: The Bucs are committed to building through the draft. Less certain is the fans' patience with a team that went 3–13 a year ago.

COACHES Raheem Morris, 34, will wear two hats this season — head coach and defensive coordinator. He took over the playcalling duties from fired coordinator Jim Bates with six games remaining in the 2009 season. Morris quickly returned the Bucs to their one-gap, Tampa 2 roots, and the defense responded by allowing 18 points per game in that stretch. Greg Olson, who took over for fired offensive coordinator Jeff Jagodzinski 10 days before the season opener, will have an offseason and training camp to install his system. It obviously will be tailored to Freeman, who will have former Bills offensive coordinator Alex Van Pelt to serve as his quarterbacks coach. Considering that the Bucs do not have a veteran quarterback to mentor Freeman, Van Pelt will have a huge influence. ***GRADE: C***

QUARTERBACKS As a rookie, Freeman spent the first seven games on the sideline before winning his first start against the Packers. He finished with three wins in nine starts and still has much to work on, including his 54.5 percent accuracy. That was better, though, than the Jets' Mark Sanchez or the Lions' Matthew Stafford, the other first-round quarterbacks in his draft class. Freeman also showed great arm strength, poise in the pocket and the ability to feel and escape pressure. This year, he also must become the vocal leader of the team. "It's my team, and I want to win," says Freeman, who has been a fixture at One Buc Place since the end of the season. "I want to get things done the right way." The Bucs have decided to remain young at quarterback. They traded Byron Leftwich to the Steelers, leaving third-year pro Josh Johnson as the backup and Rudy Carpenter, whom they signed off the Cowboys' practice squad, as the No. 3. ***GRADE: C***

RUNNING BACKS Cadillac Williams made a remarkable comeback from two serious knee injuries that ended his '07 and '08 seasons. He led the team in rushing with 823 yards and four touchdowns. But the Bucs must milk more out of Derrick Ward, who was neither Earth, Wind nor Fire after signing a four-year, $17 million contract as a free agent from the Giants a year ago. Earnest Graham, who has been more effective as a tailback, was shifted to fullback the past two seasons and has struggled to stay healthy. The Bucs would like to involve kick return man Clifton Smith as a third down back, but injuries have prevented him from taking over that role. Overall, the Bucs lack explosiveness at running back. Their longest run in 2009 was a 35-yarder by Williams. ***GRADE: C-***

RECEIVERS The Bucs worked hard to find new targets for Freeman, and a pair of rookies could be their starting wide receivers. They used a second-round pick on Illinois' Arrelious Benn, a 6'2", 220-pound wide receiver who is big, physical and great after the catch, and then gambled a bit in the fourth round by taking Mike Williams of Syracuse. The 6'2", 212-pound Williams missed all of 2008 for cheating on a test and the final three games of 2009 after leaving the team. But the Bucs did their homework on Williams, and general manager Mark Dominik believes his team will "reap the rewards." Tampa Bay also traded for Philadelphia's Reggie Brown, who has just 27 receptions over the past two seasons. Of course, the biggest weapon for Freeman is tight end Kellen Winslow, who led the team in receiving last season and figures to do the same in 2010. He's a matchup nightmare. The Bucs are excited about the play of Sammie Stroughter, who had 31 receptions as a rookie and returns as the slot receiver. Maurice Stovall, who is in the final year of his contract, is a big contributor on special teams but needs to bring that fierceness to the receiver position. ***GRADE: C-***

Williams: Mark Langello; Freeman: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Benn There, Done That Coach Raheem Morris attempted to recruit Arrelious Benn, a second-round draft pick this year, to Kansas State when he was on the Wildcats' coaching staff in 2006. "When you turn on the tape and watch Benn you see a guy who catches the football, and then after he catches the football, he's tough to get on the ground," Morris says. "You see a guy run after the catch. ... You're talking about if not the No. 1, one of the top five wideouts coming out of high school that year."

Family Matters Safety Cody Grimm, a seventh-round pick from Virginia Tech, is the son of Russ Grimm, the Hall of Fame offensive lineman and current coach with the Cardinals. Cody Grimm almost ended up playing for his father's team but could play against Arizona this season if he makes the Bucs' 53-man roster. "It is going to be awesome," Grimm says. "My dad called me in the sixth round and said they were talking about drafting me. But the bottom line is they didn't, so if I get the opportunity to play against them, I obviously want to stick it to them."

2009 STATS

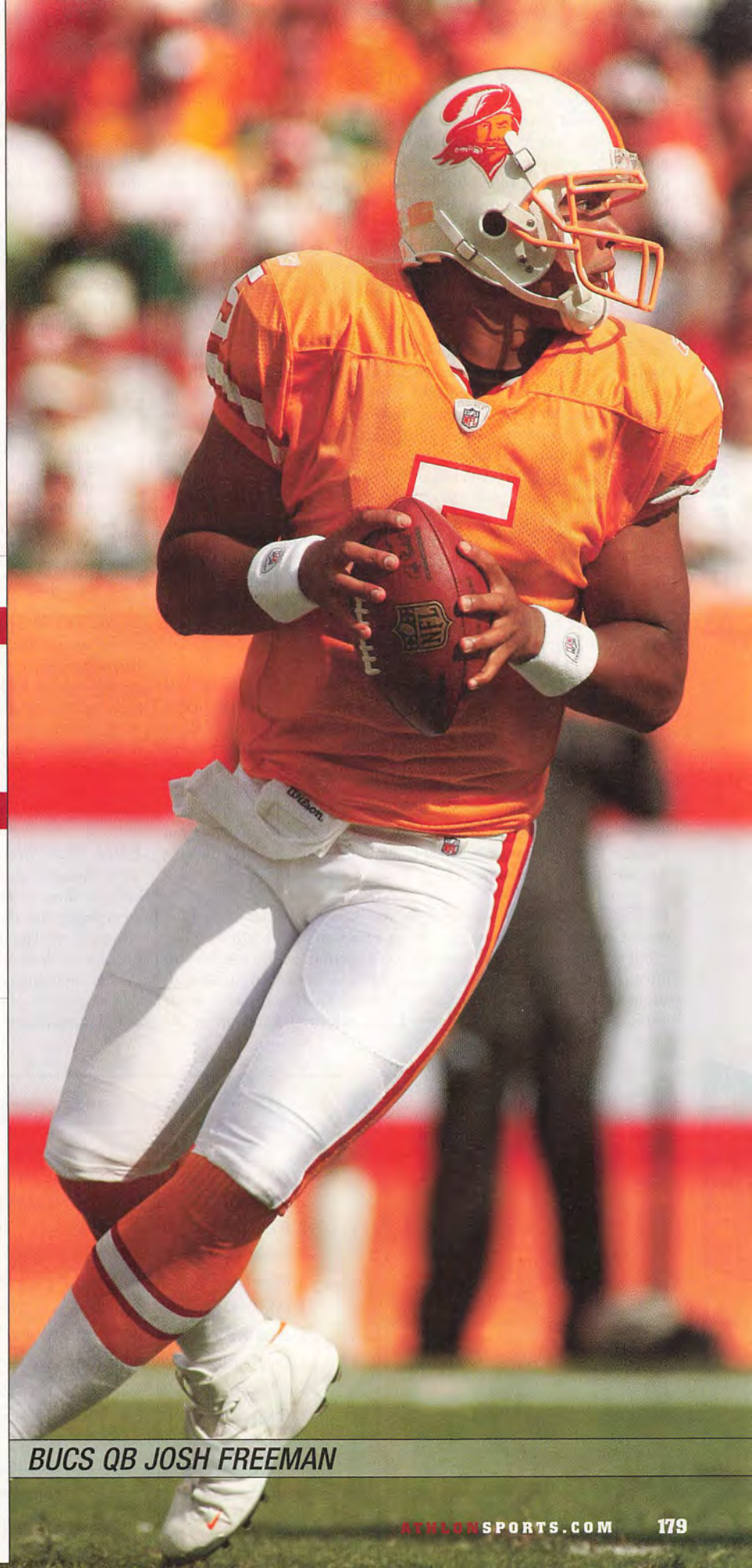
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	287.5	28	15
Rushing	101.7	23	10
Passing	185.8	24	14
Scoring	15.2	30	15
Punt Returns	11.6	4	2
Kick Returns	26.3	1	1
Red Zone TD %	51.6	16	9

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	365.6	27	14
Rushing	158.2	32	16
Passing	207.4	10	4
Scoring	25.0	27	13
Interceptions	19	T9	6
Sacks	28	T26	T12
Turnover Differential	-5	22	9

SCOUTING THE BUCS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP TAMPA BAY

"I really liked the Bucs' draft. Gerald McCoy and Brian Price should be their starting tackle tandem for the next few years and will free up middle linebacker Barrett Ruud to pursue the ball and make plays. ... When they picked that second defensive tackle, we all looked around the room and said that's going to be a team to be reckoned with vs. the run. ... Rookie receivers Arrelious Benn and Mike Williams give Josh Freeman a pair of big, athletic targets on the perimeter. The Bucs desperately needed some juice at receiver, and they added it with these two guys. ... Kellen Winslow quietly had a very strong season last year and showed signs of maturing into a leader for the young Bucs offense. He's a Pro Bowl talent. There aren't many tight ends with his package of size, speed and hands. In a division of high-profile tight ends, Winslow might be the best of the bunch. ... Their punting game fell off last season without Josh Bidwell. It didn't surprise me that they drafted a punter (Brent Bowden)."



BUCS QB JOSH FREEMAN

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Bucs still believe the offensive line is the strength of their team. But at this point, it's fair to say the unit is a bit overrated after paving the way for the league's 23rd-ranked rushing offense. The best of the bunch is right guard Davin Joseph, a road grader who was named to the Pro Bowl two years ago. But he struggled in some of the zone-blocking schemes. Center Jeff Faine is the brains of the group and the old man at 28. But he could use some help at left guard, where Jeremy Zuttah struggled at the point of attack. Look for inspired play from tackles Donald Penn and Jeremy Trueblood, who will become unrestricted free agents in 2011. Penn already has lost 25 pounds and is determined to produce in a contract year. **GRADE: B**

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN McCoy doesn't welcome the comparisons to Sapp, but the Bucs didn't invest mega-millions in the Sooner star to get a cheap, sidewalk knockoff. McCoy is the foundation upon which the Bucs plan to rebuild their defense. Fortunately, he will have help. The Bucs used a second-round pick on UCLA's Brian Price, a move they hope will shore up their defensive interior for years. McCoy and Price figure to start in the spots manned by Ryan Sims (now a backup) and Chris Hovan (released) last year. A pair of second-year linemen, tackle Roy Miller and end Kyle Moore, are ready to blossom. Both were asked to gain about 25 pounds as rookies to play in Bates' two-gap system, but they've stopped counting laps around the fast-food drive-through, the weight is gone and their explosion is back. Ends Tim Crowder and Michael Bennett are coming along, but Tampa's best edge rusher is Stylez G. White, who led the team with 6.5 sacks and 34 quarterback pressures a year ago. **GRADE: C**

LINEBACKERS Middle linebacker Barrett Ruud isn't flashy, but he is the quarterback of Morris' defense and was the team's leading tackler last season. He is better in Morris' scheme than he was in the one Bates ran for 10 games in '09. Morris will lean on Ruud to help direct a unit in which Geno Hayes and Quincy Black return on either side of him after being first-year starters in '09. Hayes channeled his inner Derrick Brooks during the final six games of the season and is another run-and-hit Florida State linebacker. The Bucs used a seventh-round pick on Dekoda Watson, another prototype Seminole who will likely play his way into the rotation. **GRADE: C-**

DEFENSIVE BACKS Cornerback Ronde Barber is 35 and in the final year of his contract. This might not be a farewell tour, but it feels like goodbye. For the first time since his rookie season, he did not have an interception last year. Barber still is effective in the slot in nickel situations, but his eventual replacement is here. The Bucs used a third-round pick on Vanderbilt's Myron Lewis, who can stand up to the league's more physical receivers at 6'2", 203. The Bucs' shutdown corner is Aqib Talib, who locked on to opponents' No. 1 wideouts a year ago and stood up. Talib tied free safety Tanard Jackson for the club lead with five interceptions. The weak link is strong safety Sabby Piscitelli, who had just four passes defensed in 16 games and takes bad angles to the ball. **GRADE: B-**

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Reggie Brown	WR	Philadelphia	Will Allen	S	Pittsburgh
Sean Jones	S	Philadelphia	Antonio Bryant	WR	Cincinnati
			Chris Hovan	DT	Free agent
			Byron Leftwich	QB	Pittsburgh
			Jimmy Wilkerson	DE	New Orleans

The Bucs decided to let Bryant leave via free agency. They wanted a better route-runner and younger receivers who could grow with Josh Freeman. Essentially, they replaced Bryant with Brown, who was not needed in Philadelphia after the additions of DeSean Jackson and Jeremy Maclin. After the loss of Allen, Jones will provide some depth at safety and some competition for wobbly starter Sabby Piscitelli. Leftwich was not a fit for the Bucs.

SPECIALISTS The Bucs lost a lot of hidden yardage on fourth down a year ago, so they used a sixth-round pick on Virginia Tech punter Brent Bowden. It will be a major surprise if he is not the team's opening day starter. Kicker Connor Barth hit three 50-yard field goals in a game at Miami and his kickoffs are deep, but he lacks a consistent track record. Look for the Bucs to add a veteran kicker to compete with Barth in camp. Micheal Spurlock had the first kickoff return for a touchdown in team history in 2007, but Smith, who suffered two concussions last season, will be the Bucs' primary kickoff and punt returner. **GRADE: C-**

FINAL ANALYSIS The Bucs no longer have an identity crisis. They went through a painful transformation last season, but they have gone back to their roots by restoring the Tampa 2 defense and drafting accordingly. But there's a lot more growing to do, and while fans and owners don't like green bananas, this might be the right course. The Bucs have a favorable early schedule — four of the first six are at home — that could help the young players gain confidence, and it's conceivable the team could hover around .500 this season. Even six wins would double their 2009 total.

Larry Smith

TAMPA BAY IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Gerald McCoy	DT	6-4	295	Oklahoma
2. Brian Price	DT	6-1	303	UCLA
2. Arrelious Benn	WR	6-2	220	Illinois
3. Myron Lewis	CB	6-2	203	Vanderbilt
4. Mike Williams	WR	6-2	212	Syracuse
6. Brent Bowden	P	6-3	202	Virginia Tech
7. Cody Grimm	S	5-11	210	Virginia Tech
7. Dekoda Watson	LB	6-2	240	Florida State
7. Erik Lorig	DE	6-4	275	Stanford

It was a deep draft loaded with defensive talent, and the Bucs' haul included six defensive players out of nine selections. McCoy should have an immediate impact as the prototypical 3-technique tackle in the Tampa 2 defense. He'll make other players around him better. The Bucs then grabbed Price, a first-round talent, to help improve the NFL's worst run defense. Price will move to nose-tackle. Benn and Williams are big targets. Benn had an up-and-down year at Illinois but is excellent after the catch. Williams fell because of off-field issues and will be a fourth-round steal if he behaves. Lewis is a Tampa 2 corner and heir apparent to Ronde Barber. Watson led the Seminoles in sacks (6.5) last season.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Carpenter, Rudy	QB	6-2	212	1	Arizona State	FA-09	FA-Dal-09
5 Freeman, Josh	QB	6-6	248	1	Kansas State	D1-09	D1-TB-09
11 Johnson, Josh	QB	6-3	205	2	San Diego	D5-08	D5-TB-08

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Graham, Earnest	RB	5-9	225	6	Florida	FA-03	FA-TB-03
32 Huggins, Kareem	RB	5-9	198	1	Hofstra	FA-09	FA-TB-09
45 Pressley, Chris	FB	5-11	260	1	Wisconsin	FA-09	FA-Cin-09
22 Smith, Clifton	RB	5-9	190	2	Fresno State	FA-08	FA-TB-08
28 Ward, Derrick	RB	5-11	228	6	Ottawa (KS)	FA-NYG-09	D7-NYJ-04
24 Williams, Carnell	RB	5-11	217	5	Auburn	D1-05	D1-TB-05

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Bradley, Mark	WR	6-1	201	5	Oklahoma	FA-09	D2-Chi-05
15 Brown, Reggie	WR	6-1	197	5	Georgia	T-Phi-10	D2a-Phi-05
80 Clayton, Michael	WR	6-4	215	6	LSU	D1-04	D1-TB-04
88 Gilmore, John	TE	6-5	257	8	Penn State	FA-Chi-08	D6-NO-02
83 Nunn, Terrence	WR	6-0	195	1	Nebraska	FA-09	FA-NE-09
46 Purvis, Ryan	TE	6-4	260	1	Boston College	FA-09	FA-TB-09
81 Spurlock, Micheal	WR	5-11	200	2	Ole Miss	FA-09	FA-Ari-06
86 Stevens, Jerramy	TE	6-7	260	8	Washington	FA-Sea-07	D1-Sea-02
85 Stovall, Maurice	WR	6-5	220	4	Notre Dame	D3-06	D3-TB-06
18 Stroughter, Sammie	WR	5-10	189	1	Oregon State	D7b-09	D7b-TB-09
19 Urrutia, Mario	WR	6-6	232	1	Louisville	FA-09	D7-Cin-08
82 Winslow, Kellen	TE	6-4	240	6	Miami	T-Cle-09	D1-Cle-04

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
61 Compas, Jonathan	C	6-3	300	1	UC-Davis	W-Oak-09	FA-Oak-09
62 Dile, Marc	G	6-4	300	1	South Florida	FA-09	FA-TB-09
69 Dotson, Demar	T	6-9	315	1	Southern Miss	FA-09	FA-TB-09
52 Faine, Jeff	C	6-3	291	7	Notre Dame	FA-NO-08	D1-Cle-03
68 Fulton, Xavier	T	6-5	301	1	Illinois	D5-09	D5-TB-09
75 Joseph, Davin	G	6-3	313	4	Oklahoma	D1-06	D1-TB-06
77 Lee, James	T	6-4	305	2	South Carolina St.	W-Cle-08	FA-Cle-08
70 Penn, Donald	T	6-5	305	4	Utah State	FA-06	FA-Min-06
65 Trueblood, Jeremy	T	6-8	320	4	Boston College	D2-06	D2-TB-06
76 Zuttah, Jeremy	G	6-4	308	2	Rutgers	D3-08	D3-TB-08

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Bennett, Michael	DL	6-4	274	1	Texas A&M	W-Sea-09	FA-Sea-09
96 Crowder, Tim	DE	6-4	260	3	Texas	FA-09	D2-Den-07
93 Miller, Roy	DT	6-2	310	1	Texas	D3-09	D3-TB-09
92 Moore, Dre	DT	6-4	305	1	Maryland	D4-08	D4-TB-08
94 Moore, Kyle	DL	6-5	272	1	USC	D4-09	D4-TB-09
98 Sims, Ryan	DT	6-4	315	8	North Carolina	T-KC-07	D1-KC-02
91 White, Stylez G.	DE	6-3	270	3	Minnesota	FA-07	D7-Hou-02

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Alston, Jon	LB	6-0	235	4	Stanford	FA-Oak-10	D3-StL-06
58 Black, Quincy	LB	6-2	240	3	New Mexico	D3-07	D3-TB-07
59 Crowell, Angelo	LB	6-1	246	7	Virginia	FA-Buf-09	D3-Buf-03
54 Hayes, Geno	LB	6-1	226	2	Florida State	D6-08	D6-TB-08
57 Hayward, Adam	LB	6-1	240	3	Portland State	D6-07	D6-TB-07
53 Koutouvides, Niko	LB	6-2	238	6	Purdue	FA-09	D4-Sea-04
49 Robinson, Lee	LB	6-2	256	1	Alcorn State	FA-09	FA-TB-09
51 Ruud, Barrett	LB	6-2	241	5	Nebraska	D2-05	D2-TB-05

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38 Anderson, Brandon	CB	5-10	179	1	Akron	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
20 Barber, Ronde	CB	5-10	184	13	Virginia	D3b-97	D3b-TB-97
31 Biggers, E.J.	CB	6-0	180	1	Western Michigan	D7a-09	D7a-TB-09
39 Cook, Emanuel	S	5-10	185	1	South Carolina	FA-09	FA-NYJ-09
43 Hall, De'von	S	6-3	215	1	Utah State	W-Ind-09	FA-Min-09
36 Jackson, Tanard	S	6-0	200	3	Syracuse	D4-07	D4-TB-07
26 Jones, Sean	S	6-1	220	6	Georgia	FA-Phi-10	D2-Cle-04
41 Lynch, Corey	S	6-0	206	2	Appalachian State	FA-09	D6-Cin-08
33 Mack, Elbert	CB	5-10	175	2	Troy	FA-08	FA-TB-08
21 Piscitelli, Sabby	S	6-3	224	3	Oregon State	D2b-07	D2b-TB-07
29 Roberson, Derrick	CB	5-10	182	1	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-Hou-07
25 Talib, Aqib	CB	6-1	205	2	Kansas	D1-08	D1-TB-08

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Barth, Connor	K	5-11	193	2	North Carolina	FA-09	FA-KC-08
48 Economos, Andrew	LS	6-1	250	4	Georgia Tech	FA-06	FA-Jac-05

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	17	Arrelious Benn (R)
	18	Sammie Stroughter
WR	19	Mike Williams (R)
	85	Maurice Stovall
LT	70	Donald Penn
	69	Demar Dotson
LG	76	Jeremy Zuttah
	62	Marc Dile
C	52	Jeff Faine
	61	Jonathan Compas
RG	75	Davin Joseph
	62	Marc Dile
RT	65	Jeremy Trueblood
	77	James Lee
TE	82	Kellen Winslow
	86	Jerramy Stevens
QB	5	Josh Freeman
	11	Josh Johnson
FB	34	Earnest Graham
	45	Chris Pressley
RB	24	Cadillac Williams
	28	Derrick Ward

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	94	Kyle Moore
	96	Tim Crowder
NT	92	Brian Price (R)
	93	Roy Miller
DT		Gerald McCoy (R)
	98	Ryan Sims
DE	91	Stylez G. White
	71	Michael Bennett
LB	54	Geno Hayes
	56	Dekoda Watson
LB	51	Barrett Ruud
	59	Angelo Crowell
LB	58	Quincy Black
	57	Adam Hayward
CB	25	Aqib Talib
	33	Elbert Mack
CB	20	Ronde Barber
	23	Myron Lewis (R)
SS	21	Sabby Piscitelli
	35	Cody Grimm (R)
FS	36	Tanard Jackson
	26	Sean Jones

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Connor Barth
KR	22	Clifton Smith
P	1	Brent Bowden (R)
PR	22	Clifton Smith

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Raheem Morris
Offensive Coordinator: Greg Olson
Special Teams Coordinator: Richard Bisaccia
Quarterbacks: Alex Van Pelt
Running Backs: Steve Logan
Wide Receivers: Eric Yarber
Assistant Wide Receivers: Tim Berbenich
Tight Ends: Alfredo Roberts
Offensive Line: Pete Mangurian
Offensive Assistant: Tim Holt
Defensive Line: Todd Wash
Linebackers: Joe Baker
Defensive Backs: Jimmy Lake
Assistant Defensive Backs: Dwayne Stukes
Defensive Assistant: Chris Mosley
Head Strength and Conditioning: Kurtis Shultz
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Chris Keenan

FANTASY FLASH

Tight end **Kellen Winslow** quietly tied a career high with five touchdowns in 2009 while also notching his second-best yardage total with 884 to go along with his 77 receptions. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(3–13)*

Sept. 13	Dallas	L	21–34
Sept. 20	at Buffalo	L	20–33
Sept. 27	N.Y. Giants	L	0–24
Oct. 4	at Washington	L	13–16
Oct. 11	at Philadelphia	L	14–33
Oct. 18	Carolina	L	21–28
Oct. 25	New England	L	7–35
Nov. 8	Green Bay	W	38–28
Nov. 15	at Miami	L	23–25
Nov. 22	New Orleans	L	7–38
Nov. 29	at Atlanta	L	17–20
Dec. 6	at Carolina	L	6–16
Dec. 13	N.Y. Jets	L	3–26
Dec. 20	at Seattle	W	24– 7
Dec. 27	at New Orleans (ot)	W	20–17
Jan. 3	Atlanta	L	10–20

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Cleveland	1:00 pm
Sept. 19	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	Pittsburgh	1:00 pm
Week 4	BYE	
Oct. 10	at Cincinnati	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	New Orleans	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	St. Louis	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	at Arizona	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	at Atlanta	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	Carolina	1:00 pm
Nov. 21	at San Francisco	4:05 pm
Nov. 28	at Baltimore	1:00 pm
Dec. 5	Atlanta	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	at Washington	1:00 pm
Dec. 19	Detroit	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	Seattle	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at New Orleans	1:00 pm

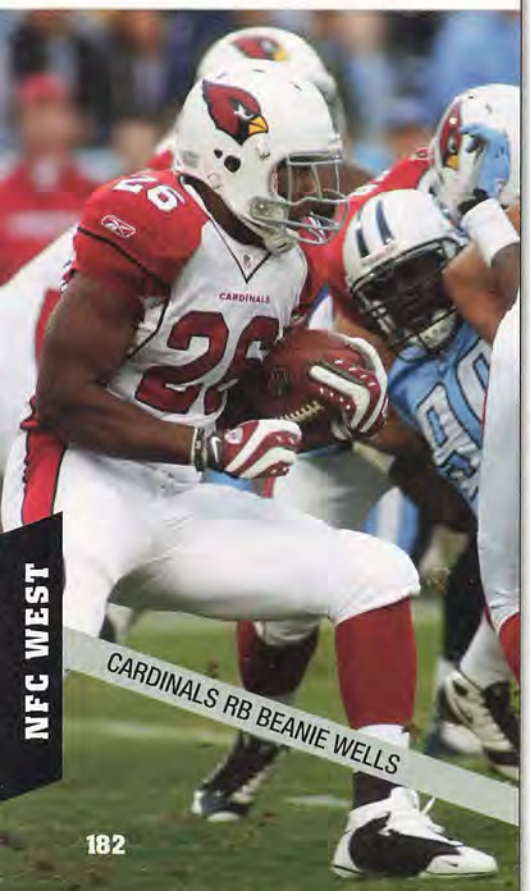
3 NFC WEST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

OWNER: William V. Bidwill
PRESIDENT: Michael J. Bidwill
GENERAL MANAGER: Rod Graves
STADIUM: University of Phoenix Stadium (63,400)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.azcardinals.com
TICKETS: 602-379-0102
TRAINING CAMP: Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, Ariz.)

Five-Year Win Trend

Conference Champion PLAYOFFS Playoffs



CARDINALS RB BEANIE WELLS

ARIZONA

NFC WEST

arizona CARDINALS

It's not difficult to come up with a storyline for the Cardinals' 2010 season: Is there life after Kurt Warner? Everything else is in place: A stable front office, one of the best coaches in the business (Ken Whisenhunt) and young talent on both sides of the ball. But it's impossible to overstate how much Warner, who retired in the offseason, meant to the Cardinals the last couple of years. And it's folly to think Matt Leinart can even approach Warner's skill level.

Fortunately, Leinart doesn't have to be Warner for the Cardinals to continue to rule the NFC West. Just play capably, give the ball to second-year back Beanie Wells (who could find his way to the Pro Bowl) and hope the defense rebounds after allowing 90 points in two playoff games last season.

But the Cardinals as Super Bowl contenders? It's hard to imagine without Warner.

COACHES In just three seasons, Whisenhunt has established himself as one of the best coaches in the NFL, and he's now the most powerful football voice in the organization, having received a contract extension through 2013. Whisenhunt is tough but fair with his players. They know where he stands at all times. He's also not swayed by a player's status or salary. The best player at a position will start, as was the case when he went with Warner instead of Leinart before the 2008 season. The Cardinals don't have an offensive coordinator per se. Whisenhunt calls the plays and helps draw up the gameplan. He has a little riverboat gambler in him; he's not afraid to take chances, even in situations that scream for caution. Defensive coordinator Bill Davis took some heat when Arizona's defense collapsed in the postseason, but blame belonged to the lack of a pass rush rather than Davis' schemes. **GRADE: A-**

QUARTERBACKS Arizona acquired Derek Anderson in the offseason, but there's no real quarterback competition — it's Leinart's job. Now, what he does with it remains to be seen. Frankly, the Cardinals don't know what they'll get from their former first-round pick. At times, Leinart has looked like a star in the making. Other times, he looked like he doesn't have the arm strength or accuracy to be an NFL starter. Leinart's maturity is no longer a question. He has worked hard the last couple of years, and even his harshest critics in the organization will admit he has grown up. But does he have the physical skills? He has a tendency to throw balls high, leaving his receivers vulnerable, and he often floats his passes rather than throwing them on a line. Leinart says he learned a lot watching Warner. The Cardinals better hope so; their future depends on him. One last thing: When Warner was asked about Leinart's readiness, he was noncommittal. That, above anything, should worry Cardinal fans. **GRADE: C**

RUNNING BACKS Wells is on the verge of becoming a star. The 6'1", 228-pounder had a terrific rookie season, rushing for 793 yards and seven touchdowns, and he got better as the year went on. Wells is a rare package: He's big enough to run defenders over but quick enough to run by them or beat them with his quick feet. He also caught 12 passes in 2009, casting doubt on the notion that he has bad hands. Wells is still learning — pass-blocking and blitz recognition weren't things he did much of at Ohio State — but as a pure rusher he could quickly become one of the NFL's elite backs. Wells split time with Tim Hightower last season, and they'll likely share the load again this year. But Whisenhunt knows what he has in Wells and doesn't know what he has in Leinart, so don't be surprised if Wells becomes the focal point of Arizona's offense. **GRADE: B**

RECEIVERS Normally, losing an Anquan Boldin would decimate a receiving corps. But the Cardinals could afford to trade Boldin and his contract demands to Baltimore because they already have one of the NFL's best receivers in Larry Fitzgerald and a capable replacement in Steve Breaston. Is Breaston as tough as Boldin over the middle? No, but he's quicker and a better deep threat. Plus, Arizona has a Boldin clone in third-year pro Early Doucet, who caught 14 passes in Arizona's two playoff games last season. Of course, the question about all the Cardinals' receivers, including Fitzgerald, is whether they'll continue to put up big numbers with Leinart rather than Warner at quarterback. Fitzgerald's numbers, in particular, could take a hit. He and Warner were best friends and almost soulmates on the field. Arizona's tight ends are used more for blocking than receiving. **GRADE: A**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Cardinals scored a major coup when they signed nine-time Pro Bowl guard Alan Faneca just three days after the draft. Faneca is a huge upgrade at the position and provides veteran leadership in the locker room. The Cardinals are solid at center with Lyle Sendlein, and with Faneca and former Browns guard Rex Hadnot on either side, Arizona will

Wells: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports; Fitzgerald: Fernando Medina/US Presswire

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Fighting Chance In an effort to improve his conditioning, quarterback Matt Leinart has trained in mixed martial arts the last couple of offseasons; he says he's in the best shape of his life. More important, he can apply a rear-naked choke hold on San Francisco 49ers linebacker Patrick Willis if need be.

A Lott to Say Strength and conditioning coach John Lott has become something of a cult figure in the organization. Coach Ken Whisenhunt believes Lott is the best in the business, and Larry Fitzgerald says his emergence as one of the league's best wide receivers is due in part to Lott pushing him in the weight room. Lott doesn't believe bigger is necessarily better. He asked Fitzgerald and Kurt Warner to lose weight the last couple of years, and he wants second-year running back Beanie Wells to play at 224 pounds this season after being at 234 last year.

Cashing In Whisenhunt was given a contract extension through 2013 worth more than $5.5 million per year. He's the first Cardinals coach to get an extension since the team moved to Arizona in 1988.

Dockett Wants His The Cardinals got rid of one contractual headache when they traded Anquan Boldin to Baltimore, but defensive end Darnell Dockett is certain to continue to make noise about a new deal. Stay tuned.

2009 STATS

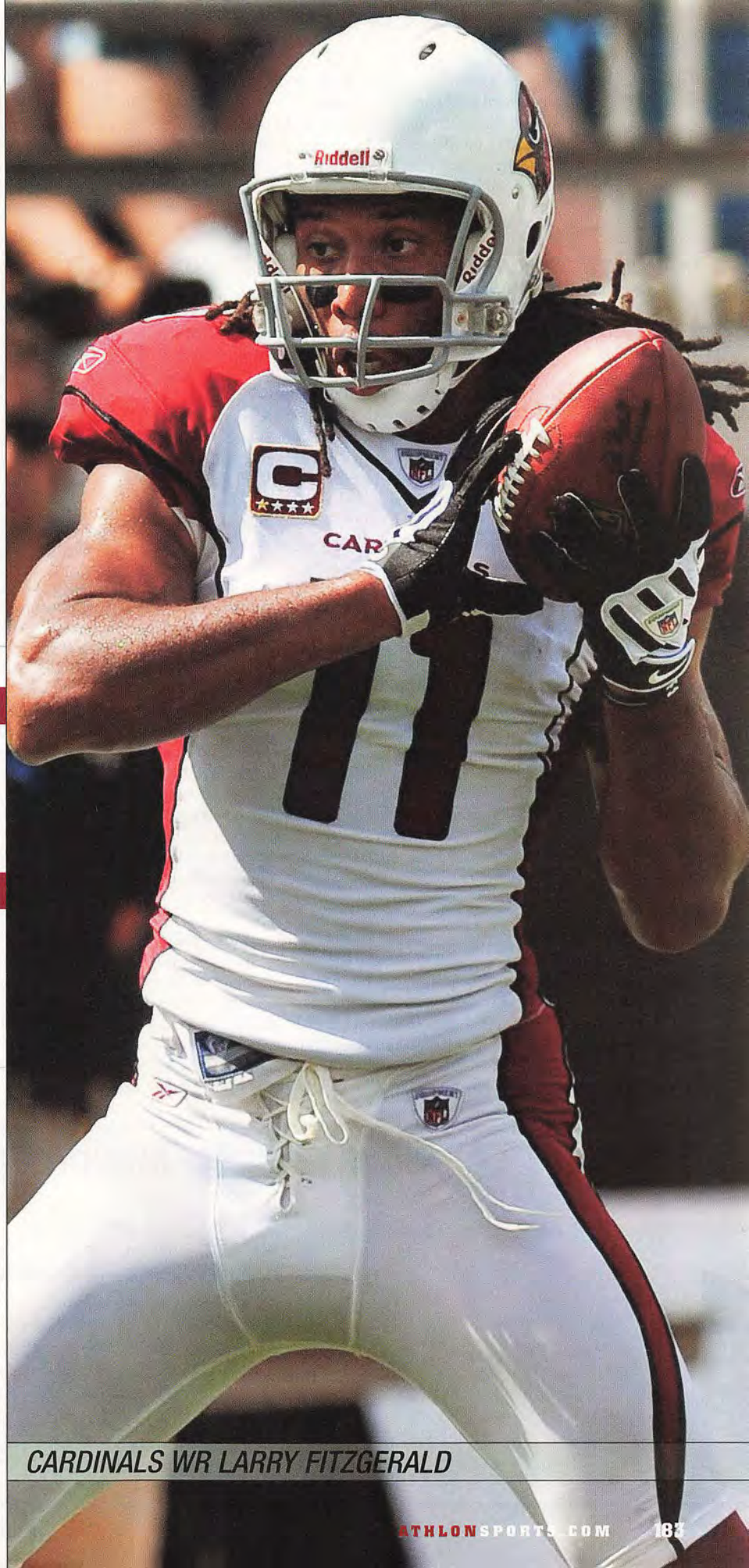
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	344.4	14	7
Rushing	93.4	28	15
Passing	251.0	12	7
Scoring	23.4	11	6
Punt Returns	6.8	24	13
Kick Returns	23.8	9	5
Red Zone TD %	70.4	1	1

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	346.4	20	10
Rushing	112.8	17	10
Passing	233.7	23	11
Scoring	20.3	T14	T6
Interceptions	21	7	5
Sacks	43	6	4
Turnover Differential	-7	T24	T11

SCOUTING THE CARDINALS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP ARIZONA

"I think they'll miss Karlos Dansby more than Anquan Boldin because they played pretty good defense the last couple years and he was an impact player in the middle. … I don't know if losing Boldin will affect them that much. They have some pretty darn good wideouts. Early Doucet has been coming along and Steve Breaston is solid. Are you better with Boldin? Of course, but they should be fine. … If Kurt Warner was back, there's a chance you'd miss Boldin more, but Matt Leinart is just figuring out what his niche will be. … The guy that gets overlooked a little is Gerald Hayes. When he was out, they struggled against the run. … Darnell Dockett is a big-time player with strength and range and attitude — he's the whole package. … Getting Kerry Rhodes was a good move for them. They lost Antrel Rolle, but losing him and getting Rhodes makes it pretty much a wash."



CARDINALS WR LARRY FITZGERALD

be much stronger up the middle, giving Wells more room to run. Tackle is still a potential problem area, though. The Cardinals will move Levi Brown to left tackle to replace Mike Gandy, but that means the left-handed Leinart's blind side will be protected by either 2008 seventh-round pick Brandon Keith, 2009 fifth-round pick Herman Johnson — neither of whom has started an NFL game — or veteran journeyman Jeremy Bridges. Still, a unit that appeared to be relatively weak heading into the draft looks a lot better with Faneca. ***GRADE: B-***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Cardinals struck gold in the draft when Tennessee's Dan Williams fell to them at No. 26. Williams fills their most glaring need defensively, a physical nosetackle who can take on two blockers and stuff the inside running game. The Cardinals were undersized at the position, thus limiting the effectiveness of their 3-4 scheme; that's not the case any longer. One of two veterans, Gabe Watson or Bryan Robinson, will start, but Williams will play most of the snaps. Ends Darnell Dockett and Calais Campbell should benefit from Williams' ability to gum up the middle. When Dockett plays with energy, he is one of the most disruptive forces in the game. He's strong enough to bull-rush tackles, yet incredibly quick off the snap. The issue is that he doesn't play his best every Sunday. In the Cardinals' two playoff contests last year, he had a combined two tackles and one sack. Campbell is a blossoming talent who had seven sacks last year; he could work his way into the Pro Bowl before long. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS Arizona has no chance to improve defensively unless it gets better play from its linebackers, and it's hard to see that happening. The Cardinals lost their best linebacker, leading tackler Karlos Dansby, and struck out in free agency trying to replace him. Arizona believes it found Dansby's successor in second-round draft pick Daryl Washington from TCU, but it's unlikely the speedy Washington can step right in and start. That leaves the job to veteran journeyman Paris Lenon, who lacks Dansby's coverage skills and sideline-to-sideline range. Another concern is how the Cardinals will muster an effective pass rush. They signed 33-year-old Joey Porter, but he's on the downside of his career. Second-year pro Cody Brown is supposed to be a pass-rush specialist, but he missed all of his rookie year with a wrist injury, halting his learning curve as he goes from college defensive end to NFL 3-4 outside linebacker. Clark Haggans again will start opposite Porter on the outside, and Gerald Hayes mans an inside spot. ***GRADE: D+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS The Cardinals traded starting cornerback Bryant McFadden during the draft so they could move up and select Fordham quarterback John Skelton. The Cardinals are high on his replacement, second-year pro Greg Toler, but they now have little depth at the position. The No. 3 cornerback is 5'8" Michael Adams, who was burned in the postseason last year. Also, while top corner Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie has the physical skills to be one of the league's top shutdown corners, he's a poor tackler and is sometimes undisciplined in coverage. It's a good thing the Cardinals have one of the better safety tandems in the league. Veteran Kerry Rhodes, acquired from the Jets, will fill in nicely for Antrel Rolle, and he and Pro Bowl strong safety Adrian Wilson can both get after quarterbacks, which will give Davis some scheme games he can play up front. One concern: Neither Rhodes nor Wilson shines in coverage, which places more pressure on the corners. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Derek Anderson	QB	Cleveland	Bertrand Berry	OLB	Retired
Alan Faneca	G	N.Y. Jets	Anquan Boldin	WR	Baltimore
Jay Feely	K	N.Y. Jets	Karlos Dansby	OLB	Miami
Rex Hadnot	G	Cleveland	Mike Gandy	LT	Free agent
Paris Lenon	LB	St. Louis	Bryant McFadden	CB	Pittsburgh
Joey Porter	OLB	Miami	Chike Okeafor	OLB	Free agent
Kerry Rhodes	S	N.Y. Jets	Neil Rackers	K	Houston
			Antrel Rolle	S	N.Y. Giants
			Kurt Warner	QB	Retired

It was a tumultuous offseason for the Cardinals. They lost their best linebacker (Dansby), an up-and-coming safety (Rolle), the heart and soul of their locker room (Boldin) and, of course, Warner. Rhodes will be a capable replacement at free safety, and the Cardinals were 6–2 without Boldin the last two years. But Dansby's loss is critical — he was the club's best linebacker — and Gandy's departure could prove significant. Porter was an astute addition. He might not be the player he once was, but he'll still be the Cardinals' best edge rusher.

SPECIALISTS The Cardinals let kicker Neil Rackers sign with Houston and signed Jay Feely to take his place. Feely's leg isn't as strong and Rackers also was a terrific onside kicker, but Arizona had reservations about Rackers after he missed a 34-yard gimme at the end of regulation in the playoffs against Green Bay. The Cardinals have an above-average kickoff returner in diminutive running back LaRod Stephens-Howling, but they need more production from their punt returners. Breaston averaged 6.7 yards per return last year, and he probably won't be used in that role now that he's the No. 2 receiver. Third-round pick Andre Roberts will get first crack at the job. ***GRADE: B***

FINAL ANALYSIS If the Cardinals were in any division other than the sorry NFC West, the loss of Warner might cripple their chances of making the playoffs. There are still serious questions about this team, particularly whether Leinart is ready to step into the spotlight. But remember: Whisenhunt nurtured Ben Roethlisberger's development as offensive coordinator in Pittsburgh; don't be surprised if he does the same with Leinart and the Cardinals win a third straight NFC West crown.

Brad Schloss

ARIZONA IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Dan Williams	NT	6-2	327	Tennessee
2. Daryl Washington	LB	6-2	230	TCU
3. Andre Roberts	WR	5-11	195	The Citadel
4. O'Brien Schofield	OLB	6-2	221	Wisconsin
5. John Skelton	QB	6-5	243	Fordham
6. Jorrick Calvin	CB	5-10	184	Troy
7. Jim Dray	TE	6-5	246	Stanford

The Cardinals couldn't have scripted the draft any better. Their glaring needs were a run-stuffing nosetackle and an athletic linebacker who could eventually replace Karlos Dansby, who was lost in free agency. Williams, who was expected to be among the top 15 picks, fell to them at No. 26, and they traded up to land Washington, who was ranked 12th on their draft board. Roberts likely will stick as Arizona's No. 4 receiver and could be the punt returner. The strong-armed Skelton is a project who figures to be the No. 3 quarterback. The Cardinals might regret not taking a cornerback higher, however, after trading veteran Bryant McFadden.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Anderson, Derek	QB	6-6	230	5	Oregon State	FA-Cle-10	D6-Bal-05
7 Leinart, Matt	QB	6-5	232	4	USC	D1-06	D1-Ari-06
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32 Broughton, Nehemiah	FB	5-11	255	3	The Citadel	FA-09	D7-Was-05
34 Hightower, Tim	RB	6-0	222	2	Richmond	D5-08	D5-Ari-08
35 Kreider, Dan	FB	5-11	250	10	New Hampshire	FA-Pit-10	FA-Pit-00
45 Maui'a, Reagan	FB	6-0	260	3	Hawaii	FA-10	D6-Mia-07
36 Stephens-Howling, LaRod	RB	5-7	180	1	Pittsburgh	D7a-09	D7a-Ari-09
26 Wells, Beanie	RB	6-1	228	1	Ohio State	D1-09	D1-Ari-09
31 Wright, Jason	RB	5-10	212	5	Northwestern	FA-Cle-09	FA-SF-04
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
84 Becht, Anthony	TE	6-6	270	10	West Virginia	FA-StL-09	D1-NYJ-00
15 Breaston, Steve	WR	6-0	189	3	Michigan	D5-07	D5-Ari-07
80 Doucet, Early	WR	6-0	212	2	LSU	D3-08	D3-Ari-08
11 Fitzgerald, Larry	WR	6-3	217	6	Pittsburgh	D1-04	D1-Ari-04
16 Gant, Edward	WR	6-3	190	1	North Alabama	FA-09	FA-Ari-09
17 Jones, Onrea	WR	6-0	202	1	Hampton	FA-09	FA-Hou-07
89 Patrick, Ben	TE	6-3	264	3	Delaware	D7-07	D7-Ari-07
83 Spach, Stephen	TE	6-4	260	4	Fresno State	FA-08	FA-Phi-05
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
73 Bridges, Jeremy	G/T	6-4	326	7	Southern Miss	FA-09	D6-Phi-03
75 Brown, Levi	T	6-5	324	3	Penn State	D1-07	D1-Ari-07
62 Claxton, Ben	C	6-2	301	3	Ole Miss	FA-09	D5-Den-03
66 Faneca, Alan	G	6-5	305	12	LSU	FA-NYJ-10	D1-Pit-98
70 Hadnot, Rex	G	6-2	320	6	Houston	FA-Cle-10	D6-Mia-04
67 Johnson, Herman	G/T	6-7	382	1	LSU	D5-09	D5-Ari-09
72 Keith, Brandon	G/T	6-5	338	2	Northern Iowa	D7-08	D7-Ari-08
76 Lutui, Deuce	G	6-4	338	4	USC	D2-06	D2-Ari-06
66 Palmer, Jonathan	G	6-4	336	1	Auburn	FA-09	FA-Phi-07
68 Pestock, Tom	G/T	6-6	317	1	NW Missouri State	FA-09	FA-Ind-09
63 Sendlein, Lyle	C	6-3	305	3	Texas	FA-07	FA-Ari-07
74 Wells, Reggie	G	6-4	312	7	Clarion	D6a-03	D6a-Ari-03
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
78 Branch, Alan	DE	6-5	338	3	Michigan	D2-07	D2-Ari-07
93 Campbell, Calais	DE	6-8	290	2	Miami	D2-08	D2-Ari-08
71 Clark, Jeremy	DE	6-3	309	2	Alabama	FA-09	FA-Phi-07
90 Dockett, Darnell	DE	6-4	285	6	Florida State	D3-04	D3-Ari-04
94 Dykes, Keilen	DT	6-3	305	1	West Virginia	FA-08	FA-Ari-08
91 Iwebema, Kenny	DE	6-4	280	2	Iowa	D4-08	D4-Ari-08
65 Kees, Ryan	DE	6-6	275	1	St. Cloud State	FA-09	FA-Det-09
97 Robinson, Bryan	DT	6-4	304	13	Fresno State	FA-Cin-08	FA-StL-97
98 Watson, Gabe	DT	6-4	329	4	Michigan	D4-06	D4-Ari-06
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
52 Beisel, Monty	LB	6-3	244	9	Kansas State	FA-09	D4-KC-01
50 Brown, Cody	LB	6-3	244	1	Connecticut	D2-09	D2-Ari-09
59 Davis, Will	LB	6-2	261	1	Illinois	D6-09	D6-Ari-09
53 Haggans, Clark	LB	6-4	243	10	Colorado State	FA-Pit-08	D5-Pit-00
54 Hayes, Gerald	LB	6-1	246	7	Pittsburgh	D3-03	D3-Ari-03
95 Highsmith, Ali	LB	6-1	230	2	LSU	FA-08	FA-Ari-08
51 Lenon, Paris	LB	6-2	235	8	Richmond	FA-StL-10	FA-GB-01
55 Porter, Joey	LB	6-3	255	11	Colorado State	FA-Mia-10	D3-Pit-99
56 Walker, Reggie	LB	6-0	238	1	Kansas State	FA-09	FA-Ari-09
96 Washington, Mark	LB	6-3	245	1	Texas State	FA-09	FA-SF-07
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
41 Abdullah, Hamza	SS	6-2	216	5	Washington State	FA-09	D7-TB-05
27 Adams, Michael	CB	5-8	181	3	UL Lafayette	FA-07	FA-Ari-07
23 Barksdale, Rashad	CB	6-0	208	2	Albany	FA-09	D6-Phi-07
20 Brown, Ralph	CB	5-10	185	10	Nebraska	FA-Cle-07	D5-NYG-00
49 Johnson, Rashad	S	5-11	203	1	Alabama	D3-09	D3-Ari-09
25 Rhodes, Kerry	S	6-3	214	5	Louisville	T-NYJ-10	D4-NYJ-05
29 Rodgers-Cromartie, Dominique	CB	6-2	182	2	Tennessee State	D1-08	D1-Ari-08
28 Toler, Greg	CB	6-0	191	1	Saint Paul's	D4-09	D4-Ari-09
22 Ware, Matt	S	6-2	215	6	UCLA	W-Phi-06	D3-Phi-04
24 Wilson, Adrian	SS	6-3	226	9	NC State	D3-01	D3-Ari-01
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Feely, Jay	K	5-10	205	9	Michigan	FA-NYJ-10	FA-Atl-01
5 Graham, Ben	P	6-5	235	5	Deakin	FA-08	FA-NYJ-05
82 Leach, Mike	LS	6-2	238	10	William & Mary	FA-09	FA-Ten-00

Kirby Lee/US Presswire

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	11	Larry Fitzgerald
	80	Early Doucet
WR	15	Steve Breaston
	12	Andre Roberts (R)
LT	75	Levi Brown
	73	Jeremy Bridges
LG	66	Alan Faneca
	74	Reggie Wells
C	63	Lyle Sendlein
	62	Ben Claxton
RG	70	Rex Hadnot
	76	Deuce Lutui
RT	72	Brandon Keith
	73	Jeremy Bridges
TE	84	Anthony Becht
	89	Ben Patrick
QB	7	Matt Leinart
	3	Derek Anderson
FB	32	Nehemiah Broughton
	45	Reagan Maui'a
RB	26	Beanie Wells
	34	Tim Hightower

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	93	Calais Campbell
	91	Kenny Iwebema
NT	98	Gabe Watson
	92	Dan Williams (R)
DE	90	Darnell Dockett
	78	Alan Branch
OLB	53	Clark Haggans
	58	Daryl Washington (R)
ILB	54	Gerald Hayes
	52	Monty Beisel
ILB	51	Paris Lenon
	95	Ali Highsmith
OLB	55	Joey Porter
	59	Will Davis
CB	29	Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie
	27	Michael Adams
CB	28	Greg Toler
	27	Michael Adams
SS	24	Adrian Wilson
	22	Matt Ware
FS	25	Kerry Rhodes
	49	Rashad Johnson

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jay Feely
KR	36	LaRod Stephens-Howling
P	5	Ben Graham
PR	12	Andre Roberts (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Ken Whisenhunt
Asst. Head Coach/Running Game Coordinator/Offensive Line: Russ Grimm
Passing Game Coordinator: Mike Miller
Defensive Coordinator: Bill Davis
Special Teams: Kevin Spencer
Quarterbacks: Chris Miller
Running Backs: Tommie Robinson
Wide Receivers: John McNulty
Tight Ends: Freddie Kitchens
Offensive Quality Control: Chad Grimm
Defensive Line: Ron Aiken
Linebackers: Matt Raich
Defensive Backs: Donnie Henderson
Asst. Defensive Backs: Rick Courtright
Defensive Quality Control: Ryan Slowik
Strength and Conditioning: John Lott

FANTASY FLASH

After catching only 17 balls for 214 yards and a TD in nine regular-season appearances, **Early Doucet** erupted for 14 catches for 145 yards and two scores in two playoff games. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(10-6)*

Sept. 13	San Francisco	L	16–20
Sept. 20	at Jacksonville	W	31–17
Sept. 27	Indianapolis	L	10–31
Oct. 11	Houston	W	28–21
Oct. 18	at Seattle	W	27– 3
Oct. 25	at N.Y. Giants	W	24–17
Nov. 1	Carolina	L	21–34
Nov. 8	at Chicago	W	41–21
Nov. 15	Seattle	W	31–20
Nov. 22	at St. Louis	W	21–13
Nov. 29	at Tennessee	L	17–20
Dec. 6	Minnesota	W	30–17
Dec. 14	at San Francisco	L	9–24
Dec 20	at Detroit	W	31–24
Dec. 27	St. Louis	W	31–10
Jan. 3	Green Bay	L	7–33
Postseason			
Jan. 10	Green Bay (ot)	W	51–45
Jan. 17	at New Orleans	L	45–14

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at St. Louis	4:15 pm
Sept. 19	at Atlanta	1:00 pm
Sept. 26	Oakland	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	at San Diego	4:15 pm
Oct. 10	New Orleans	4:05 pm
Week 6	BYE	
Oct. 24	at Seattle	4:05 pm
Oct. 31	Tampa Bay	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	at Minnesota	1:00 pm
Nov. 14	Seattle	4:15 pm
Nov 21	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Nov. 29	San Francisco (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 5	St. Louis	4:15 pm
Dec. 12	Denver	4:15 pm
Dec. 19	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Dec. 25	Dallas (Sat.)	7:30 pm
Jan. 2	at San Francisco	4:15 pm

4 NFC WEST FORECAST

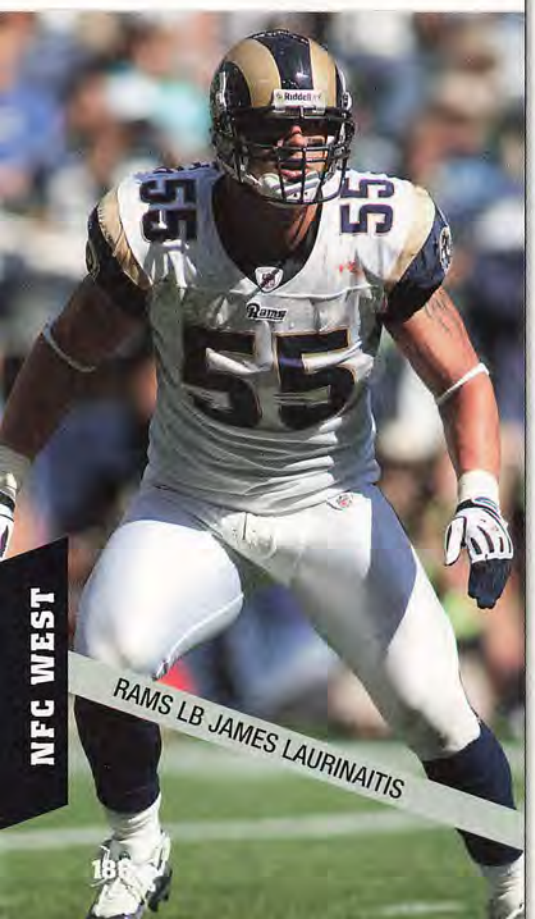
st. louis RAMS

THE ORGANIZATION
OWNER: Chip Rosenbloom
GENERAL MANAGER: Billy Devaney
STADIUM: Edward Jones Dome (66,000)
SURFACE: FieldTurf
WEBSITE: www.stlouisrams.com
TICKETS: 314-425-8830
TRAINING CAMP: Rams Park (Earth City, Mo.)

ST. LOUIS

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	6
2006	8
2007	3
2008	2
2009	1



Nobody figured that the Rams would suddenly reverse course in 2009 after bringing in Steve Spagnuolo as their new coach. But few probably thought that things would get worse. But that's what happened. On the heels of 3–13 and 2–14 finishes the previous two years, the Rams slipped to an NFL-worst 1–15 last season. That adds up to 6–42 over the last three seasons, each of which ended with the Rams in the NFC West cellar.

After picking second overall in the last two drafts, the Rams had the No. 1 selection this year and spent it on Oklahoma's Sam Bradford, hoping that he'll become a franchise quarterback. And soon.

The team patched some holes during free agency and believes that it had a solid draft. Spagnuolo is eager put 2009 is his rear-view mirror.

"I'm ready to start the season now … and prove that we're doing the right things and we're going to move on to winning," he says.

COACHES Among other goals, Spagnuolo wanted to change the culture after taking over last year. He stressed a team-first approach that included the removal of all pictures of individual players from the halls of Rams Park. Spagnuolo also emphasized high character among those who filled his roster, and he and general manager Billy Devaney were determined to limit their personnel additions to "ascending" players, not ones whose better days were behind them. Spagnuolo never had served as a head coach, and his coordinators — Pat Shurmur on offense and Ken Flajole on defense — were in new posts, too. Shurmur brought a version of the West Coast offense that he learned during 10 seasons on Andy Reid's staff in Philadelphia, but he certainly didn't get similar results; the Rams averaged a league-low 10.9 points per game. Flajole, formerly the linebackers coach in Carolina, ran a conventional 4-3 that yielded 27.2 points per game, the second-highest total in the league. Both units were affected by spotty performers and injuries, so verdicts on Shurmur and Flajole must wait. ***GRADE: C-***

QUARTERBACKS The early April release of Marc Bulger, the starter for the previous seven-plus seasons, heralded a new era for the Rams — and made it obvious that Bradford would be their choice at the top of the draft. Bradford arrived with some question marks, including two injuries to his throwing shoulder, the second requiring surgery, and only two full seasons of college experience at Oklahoma. Still, the Rams were highly impressed with Bradford at his pro day performance and a private workout, so they'll sink or swim with the rookie. Veteran A.J. Feeley was a free agent signee and presumably will back up Bradford. He hasn't thrown a pass in a regular-season game since 2007. The Rams also have Keith Null, a sixth-round draft pick out of West Texas A&M last year who started the last four games following injuries to Bulger and the departed Kyle Boller. ***GRADE: D***

RUNNING BACKS Despite a painful back injury, Steven Jackson put together a Pro Bowl year, rushing for 1,416 yards — second in the NFL and the fifth year in a row he'd topped 1,000 — and adding 322 yards on 51 receptions. Jackson missed just one game because of the herniated disk that flared up during the second half of the season. His numbers would have been even more impressive had the Rams presented a more potent passing attack. A six-year veteran, Jackson also made an overt effort to become a positive voice in the locker room, and Spagnuolo praised Jackson's leadership throughout a difficult season. Jackson had 324 carries, the second-highest total of his career, and the Rams are hoping Kenneth Darby and second-year pro Chris Ogbonnaya can provide effective relief. Mike Karney returns at fullback, where he was solid as a lead blocker for Jackson last year. ***GRADE: B+***

RECEIVERS Where the Rams once maintained a stable of standout wide receivers, they slogged through '09 with mostly youngsters and unproven veterans. That group will provide the nucleus of the wideout corps this season, too. Still, the return of Laurent Robinson, who was off to an impressive start last season before going down with a fractured leg and ankle in Week 3, should be a big boost. Also, the addition of fourth-round draft pick Mardy Gilyard gives the team a prospect with big-play potential. Donnie Avery, Keenan Burton, Brandon Gibson and Danny Amendola got valuable experience last year. Also, Brooks Foster, a fifth-round draft choice last year who missed the entire season after undergoing ankle surgery, is healthy again. The Rams parted ways with veteran tight end Randy McMichael and will head into the season without a go-to man there. The options include newly acquired Darcy Johnson, Daniel Fells and Billy Bajema, both of whom showed flashes at times last season, along with two rookies, Michael Hoomanawanui and Fendi Onobun. ***GRADE: C-***

Laurinaitis, Jackson: Peter Brouillet

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Staying With It Rookie wide receiver Mardy Gilyard flunked out of school and lived in his car for several months before re-qualifying at Cincinnati and carving out a solid college career.

Workout Warrior The Rams acknowledge that sixth-round draftee Fendi Onobun, a tight end from Houston, is a project. The team's scouts were intrigued when Onobun, who played four years of basketball at Arizona before transferring to Houston, put up eye-popping numbers during a private workout.

West Texas Pipeline The Rams have made sixth-round draft picks from Division II West Texas A&M the past two years: quarterback Keith Null in 2009 and defensive end Eugene Sims in '10. "We own West Texas," GM Billy Devaney quips.

Cold Draft(s) Wondering why the Rams have struggled in recent years? Look no further than their 2006 and '07 drafts. Of the 18 players selected, only three remain with the team: defensive tackle Clifton Ryan (fifth round), defensive end Victor Adeyanju (fourth) and offensive lineman Mark Setterstrom (seventh).

2009 STATS

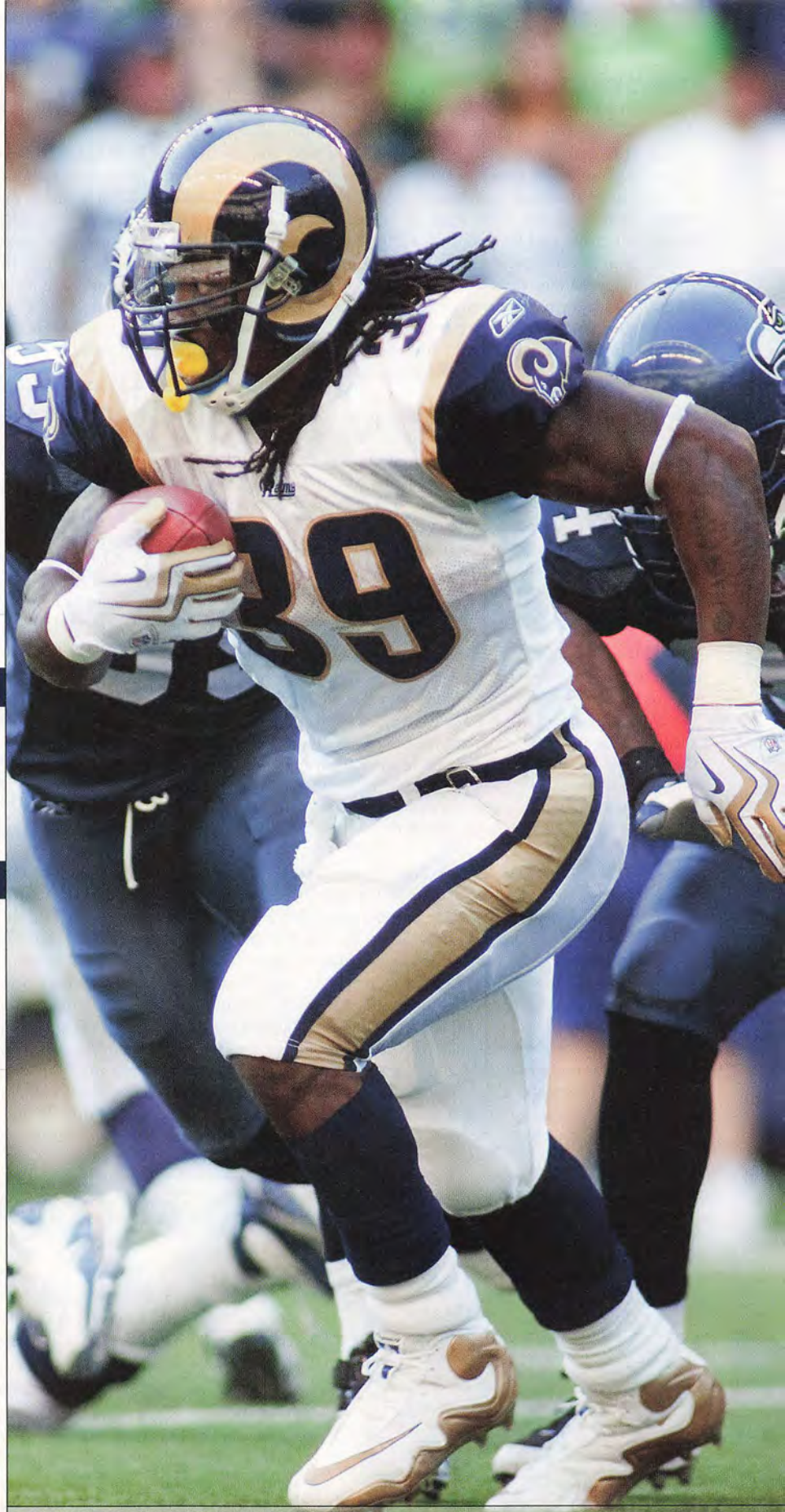
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	279.4	29	16
Rushing	111.5	20	8
Passing	167.9	28	16
Scoring	10.9	32	16
Punt Returns	10.7	8	5
Kick Returns	23.2	T11	T6
Red Zone TD %	32.4	31	16

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	372.8	29	15
Rushing	137.6	27	15
Passing	235.2	25	12
Scoring	27.2	31	15
Interceptions	8	T31	16
Sacks	25	30	16
Turnover Differential	-13	T30	15

SCOUTING THE RAMS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP ST. LOUIS

"It'll be a big challenge for Sam Bradford. He's shown there's some durability questions, and if you're not protecting him well, there's a chance you'll lose him. Their next-biggest issue is their offensive line. They need to get that taken care of as well. … Bradford's got a chance to be a Pro Bowl talent. He was the No. 1 player on our board. If he were sitting there for us, there was no chance we would pass him up. … One of the things they have going for them is that there's a good relationship between the coach and the GM. … Chris Long has the motor and up-tempo style of play. But it'll take him a little while to develop the position-specific stuff. He was a little light, and some of the things you get away with in college, he couldn't get away with in this league. … James Laurinitis is a guy who jumps out at you. He's not so much a thumper as an athlete. If they keep him free to run and roam and hit, he could be very productive."



RAMS RB STEVEN JACKSON

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN The Rams got limited return on their investment in Baylor tackle Jason Smith with the No. 2 overall choice in the 2009 draft. Because of a knee injury and later a concussion, Smith played just eight games, starting five at right tackle. But the Rams remain high on Smith, and he figures to wind up on the all-important left side after the trade of veteran Alex Barron to Dallas. Rookie Rodger Saffold has the inside track at right tackle. Jacob Bell will be back at left guard, and Jason Brown, a 2009 free agent pickup, is set at center. John Greco started the last three games at right guard after Richie Incognito was released and is expected to go into training camp as the favorite to return there. Free agent pickup Hank Fraley also could figure into the mix. Versatile Adam Goldberg and Mark Setterstrom provide solid depth. Although it's relatively young, this group could emerge as the Rams' best line in years. ***GRADE: C+***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN The Rams have been vulnerable against the run the past few years, and after ranking 27th in the league last season they've done little to remedy that. The addition of tackle Fred Robbins via free agency could help, and the Rams did draft three ends. But most of this year's line was part of last year's debacle. A quickly improving Clifton Ryan figures to team with Robbins inside; second-year pro Darell Scott also will be in the rotation. Chris Long, who has yet to dominate in two seasons after being selected No. 2 overall, will man one of the end spots. The other likely goes to James Hall, unless Leonard Little chooses not to retire. ***GRADE: D+***

LINEBACKERS James Laurinaitis became just the second rookie in franchise history to lead the Rams in tackles, piling up 120 at his middle linebacker spot. Among rookies, only Houston linebacker Brian Cushing had more (133). Na'il Diggs arrived in the offseason as a free agent and is expected to start at strong-side linebacker, with ex-Cowboy Bobby Carpenter, obtained in the Barron trade, on the weak side. David Vobora, the "Mr. Irrelevant" of the 2008 draft, started on the strong side much of last season and will provide depth, as will Larry Grant and Chris Chamberlain. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Cornerback Ron Bartell should rebound from his mediocre showing last year, when he was hampered much of the season by a thigh injury. A healthy Bartell would give the Rams one solid corner, but the other spot is less certain. Bradley Fletcher beat out Jonathan Wade for the starting job after the first four games last season, but in his third start he suffered a serious knee injury that ended his rookie season. Fletcher's rehab has gone well, so he should be in good stead to regain his job. Quincy Butler and later Justin King filled in at corner in Fletcher's absence, with so-so results. Rookies Jerome Murphy (third round) and Marquis Johnson (seventh) will each get a long look at corner during the preseason. The team's top safety, Oshiomogho Atogwe, would gain more notice if he played for a team that was good enough to merit a national broadcast now and then. Atogwe plays opposite strong safety James Butler, and Craig Dahl, who is coming off a nice '09 season, can fill in at either spot. ***GRADE: C-***

SPECIALISTS A year after he deserved Pro Bowl recognition, Donnie Jones averaged fewer yards on his punts — 46.8 yards vs. 50.0 in '08 — but arguably put together a better season. With new special teams coach Tom McMahon emphasizing more directional punting, Jones improved his net average slightly and was a major factor in the team's much-improved coverage. Kicker Josh Brown was less reliable than usual, though he did connect on six field goals of 50 yards or longer. Amendola did an adequate job as the Rams' main return man most of last season, but Gilyard could well get the kickoff return assignment, and possibly oust Amendola on punt returns, too. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Bobby Carpenter	LB	Dallas	Alex Barron	OT	Dallas
Na'il Diggs	LB	Carolina	Kyle Boller	QB	Oakland
Kevin Dockery	CB	N.Y. Giants	Marc Bulger	QB	Free agent
A.J. Feeley	QB	Carolina	Adam Carriker	DT	Washington
Hank Fraley	C/G	Cleveland	Paris Lenon	LB	Arizona
Darcy Johnson	TE	N.Y. Giants	Ruvell Martin	WR	Seattle
Kevin Payne	S	Chicago	Randy McMichael	TE	Free agent
Fred Robbins	DT	N.Y. Giants	Jonathan Wade	CB	Detroit

Although it didn't come as a surprise, Bulger's release signaled a new direction for the Rams. Because of injuries, Carriker, the Rams' first-round draft pick in 2007, never was able to prove himself to Spagnuolo and his staff. McMichael also never lived up to the expectations that came with his arrival in '07. Diggs and Robbins figure to move right in as starters on defense, and Fraley will be in the mix on offense. Feeley might be the starting quarterback on opening day, but he'll also be enlisted to help tutor rookie Sam Bradford.

FINAL ANALYSIS Bradford is the new face of the franchise, and much of the Rams' hopes for a 2010 turnaround rest on his surgically repaired right shoulder. He might not be the starter in Week 1, but barring a major setback, he'll move into that role sooner rather than later. With Spagnuolo heading into his second season as the coach, the roster has been better tuned to the "scheme-fit" players he wants, especially on defense. Still, the Rams have a long, bumpy road to travel. And the unsettled ownership situation that stalked the team for months has not helped promote stability. Spagnuolo, Devaney and front office chief Kevin Demoff vowed to rebuild the franchise, but none predicted an overnight renaissance. They've taken the slow-but-sure approach, and the Rams are probably at least a couple of years away from truly regaining their footing.

Layne Murdoch

ST. LOUIS IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Sam Bradford	QB	6-4	236	Oklahoma
2. Rodger Saffold	OT	6-5	318	Indiana
3. Jerome Murphy	CB	6-0	196	South Florida
4. Mardy Gilyard	WR	6-0	187	Cincinnati
5. Michael Hoomanawanui	TE	6-4	264	Illinois
5. Hall Davis	DE	6-4	271	UL Lafayette
6. Fendi Onobun	TE	6-6	252	Houston
6. Eugene Sims	DE	6-6	235	W. Texas A&M
7. Marquis Johnson	CB	5-10	192	Alabama
7. George Selvie	DE	6-4	250	South Florida
7. Josh Hull	LB	6-3	237	Penn State

At some point during the 2010 season — perhaps Week 1 — Bradford will be handed the keys to the Rams' offense. You don't spend the No. 1 overall pick in the draft, plus millions to sign him, on a prospect and then keep him tethered to the bench. Gilyard, who was highly productive in college, is an intriguing addition to a young group of receivers that Bradford will be targeting. Gilyard also was an exciting return man at Cincinnati and could win one of those jobs, too. Saffold could elbow his way into the mix among the linemen providing protection for the rookie quarterback. Hoomanawanui joins a crowded group of tight ends on the roster, but at this point, none jumps out as the top guy.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Feeley, A.J.	QB	6-3	220	9	Oregon	FA-Car-10	D5-Phi-01
9 Null, Keith	QB	6-4	219	1	West Texas A&M	D6-09	D6-StL-09

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
34 Darby, Kenneth	RB	5-10	219	2	Alabama	FA-08	D7-TB-07
39 Jackson, Steven	RB	6-2	236	6	Oregon State	D1-04	D1-StL-04
44 Karney, Mike	FB	5-11	260	6	Arizona State	FA-09	D5-NO-04
22 Ogbonnaya, Chris	RB	6-0	225	1	Texas	D7-09	D7-StL-09

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Amendola, Danny	WR	5-11	186	1	Texas Tech	FA-09	FA-Dal-08
17 Avery, Donnie	WR	5-11	183	2	Houston	D2-08	D2-StL-08
47 Bajema, Billy	TE	6-4	259	5	Oklahoma State	FA-SF-09	D7-SF-05
14 Burton, Keenan	WR	6-0	206	2	Kentucky	D4b-08	D4b-StL-08
49 Butler, Eric	TE	6-2	265	1	Mississippi State	FA-09	FA-NYG-08
46 Fells, Daniel	TE	6-4	272	3	California-Davis	FA-08	FA-Atl-06
83 Foster, Brooks	WR	6-1	205	1	North Carolina	D5-09	D5-StL-09
11 Gibson, Brandon	WR	6-0	210	1	Washington State	T-Phi-09	D6-Phi-09
87 Johnson, Darcy	TE	6-5	252	3	UCF	FA-NYG-10	FA-NYG-06
82 Kent, Jordan	WR	6-4	219	3	Oregon	FA-09	D6-Sea-07
23 Parks, Cord	WR	5-10	185	1	Northeastern	FA-09	FA-StL-09
19 Robinson, Laurent	WR	6-2	197	3	Illinois State	T-Atl-09	D3-Atl-07

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62 Allen III, Roger	G	6-3	323	1	Missouri Western St.	FA-09	FA-StL-09
63 Bell, Jacob	G	6-5	300	6	Miami (OH)	FA-Ten-08	D5-Ten-04
60 Brown, Jason	C	6-3	328	5	North Carolina	FA-Bal-09	D4-Bal-05
Fraley, Hank	G/C	6-3	310	10	Robert Morris	FA-Cle-10	FA-Pit-00
73 Goldberg, Adam	T	6-7	309	7	Wyoming	T-Min-06	FA-Min-03
79 Greco, John	G	6-4	329	2	Toledo	D3-08	D3-StL-08
68 McKee, Ryan	T	6-6	291	1	Southern Miss	W-NYJ-09	FA-NYJ-09
67 Miller, Drew	C	6-5	303	2	Florida	FA-09	FA-Jac-08
66 Setterstrom, Mark	G	6-4	318	4	Minnesota	D7b-06	D7b-StL-06
77 Smith, Jason	T	6-5	307	1	Baylor	D1-09	D1-StL-09
64 Trautwein, Phil	T	6-6	308	1	Florida	FA-09	FA-StL09
61 Young, Eric	T	6-3	304	1	Tennessee	FA-09	FA-Cle-08

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
94 Adeyanju, Victor	DE	6-4	284	4	Indiana	D4-06	D4-StL-06
98 Ah You, C.J.	DE	6-4	270	1	Oklahoma	FA-07	D7-Buf-07
93 Bradwell, Chris	DT	6-5	280	1	Troy	FA-09	FA-TB-08
65 Conover, Sean	DE	6-5	275	4	Bucknell	FA-09	FA-Ten-06
69 Douzable, Leger	DT	6-4	305	2	UCF	FA-09	FA-Min-08
71 Gibson, Gary	DT	6-3	300	4	Rutgers	FA-09	FA-Bal-05
96 Hall, James	DE	6-2	281	10	Michigan	T-Det-07	FA-Det-00
72 Long, Chris	DE	6-3	276	2	Virginia	D1-08	D1-StL-08
99 Ramsey, LaJuan	DT	6-3	300	3	USC	W-Ten-09	D6-Phi-06
98 Robbins, Fred	DT	6-4	317	10	Wake Forest	FA-NYG-10	D2-Min-00
95 Ryan, Clifton	DT	6-3	324	3	Michigan State	D5b-07	D5b-StL-07
97 Scott, Darell	DT	6-3	315	1	Clemson	D4-09	D4-StL-09
76 Wyche, James	DE	6-5	279	4	Syracuse	W-Jac-09	D7-Jac-06

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Asiodu, K.C.	LB	6-2	242	1	Central Oklahoma	FA-09	FA-StL-09
Carpenter, Bobby	LB	6-2	249	4	Ohio State	D1-06	D1-Dal-06
57 Chamberlain, Chris	LB	6-1	230	2	Tulsa	D7a-08	D7a-StL-08
53 Diggs, Na'il	LB	6-4	240	9	Ohio State	FA-Car-10	D4-GB-00
59 Grant, Larry	LB	6-1	251	1	Ohio State	FA-08	D7-SF-08
55 Laurinaitis, James	LB	6-2	247	1	Ohio State	D2-09	D2-StL-09
58 Vobora, David	LB	6-1	239	2	Idaho	D7b-08	D7b-StL-08

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21 Atogwe, Oshiomogho	S	5-11	205	5	Stanford	D3a-05	D3a-StL-05
24 Bartell, Ron	CB	6-1	206	5	Howard	D2-05	D2-StL-05
30 Brown, Marcus	CB	6-2	203	1	McNeese State	FA-09	FA-Ari-08
37 Butler, James	S	6-3	209	5	Georgia Tech	FA-NYG-09	FA-NYG-05
36 Butler, Quincy	CB	6-1	188	2	TCU	W-Dal-08	FA-Dal-06
43 Dahl, Craig	S	6-1	209	3	North Dakota State	FA-09	FA-NYG-07
20 Dockery, Kevin	CB	5-8	188	4	Mississippi State	FA-NYG-10	FA-NYG-06
32 Fletcher, Bradley	CB	6-0	198	1	Iowa	D3-09	D3-StL-09
25 Gorrer, Danny	CB	6-0	185	1	Texas A&M	FA-09	FA-NO-09
31 King, Justin	CB	5-11	188	2	Penn State	D4a-08	D4a-StL-08
30 Payne, Kevin	S	6-0	212	3	UL Monroe	T-Chi-10	D5a-Chi-07
27 Roach, David	S	6-2	216	1	TCU	FA-08	FA-NO-08

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Brown, Josh	K	6-0	205	7	Nebraska	FA-SEA-08	D7-Sea-03
5 Jones, Donnie	P	6-2	225	6	LSU	FA-Mia-07	D7-Sea-04
45 Massey, Chris	LS	6-0	237	8	Marshall	D7-02	D7-StL-02

Newman Lowrance/Getty Images

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	19	Laurent Robinson
	11	Brandon Gibson
WR	17	Donnie Avery
	14	Keenan Burton
LT	77	Jason Smith
	73	Adam Goldberg
LG	63	Jacob Bell
	66	Mark Setterstrom
C	60	Jason Brown
		Hank Fraley
RG	79	John Greco
	66	Mark Setterstrom
RT	76	Rodger Saffold (R)
	73	Adam Goldberg
TE	87	Darcy Johnson
	46	Daniel Fells
QB	8	Sam Bradford (R)
	4	A.J. Feeley
FB	44	Mike Karney
	47	Billy Bajema
RB	39	Steven Jackson
	34	Kenneth Darby

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	96	James Hall
	94	Victor Adeyanju
DT	95	Clifton Ryan
	69	Leger Douzable
DT	98	Fred Robbins
	97	Darell Scott
DE	72	Chris Long
	99	C.J. Ah You
SLB	53	Na'il Diggs
	58	David Vobora
MLB	55	James Laurinaitis
	59	Larry Grant
WLB		Bobby Carpenter
	57	Chris Chamberlain
CB	24	Ron Bartell
	26	Jerome Murphy (R)
CB	32	Bradley Fletcher
	31	Justin King
SS	37	James Butler
	43	Craig Dahl
FS	21	Oshiomogho Atogwe
	43	Craig Dahl

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Josh Brown
KR	81	Mardy Gilyard (R)
P	5	Donnie Jones
PR	16	Danny Amendola

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Steve Spagnuolo
Offensive Coordinator: Pat Shurmur
Defensive Coordinator: Ken Flajole
Special Teams Coordinator: Tom McMahon
Quality Control/Special Teams: Derius Swinton
Asst. Head Coach/Quarterbacks: Richard Curl
Running Backs: Sylvester Croom
Wide Receivers: Nolan Cromwell
Tight Ends: Frank Leonard
Offensive Line: Steve Loney
Quality Control/Offense: Andy Sugarman
Defensive Line: Brendan Daly
Linebackers: Paul Ferraro
Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks: Clayton Lopez
Defensive Backs/Safeties: Andre Curtis
Quality Control/Defense: Matt House
Strength: Rock Gullickson
Assistant Strength: Chuck Faucette

FANTASY FLASH

Over the final eight games of his rookie season, wide receiver **Brandon Gibson** averaged more than four catches for 43 yards per game, leading the team in receptions over that span. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(1–15)*

Sept. 13	at Seattle	L	0–28
Sept. 20	at Washington	L	7– 9
Sept. 27	Green Bay	L	17–36
Oct. 4	at San Francisco	L	0–35
Oct. 11	Minnesota	L	10–38
Oct. 18	at Jacksonville (ot)	L	20–23
Oct. 25	Indianapolis	L	6–42
Nov. 1	at Detroit	W	17–10
Nov. 15	New Orleans	L	23–28
Nov. 22	Arizona	L	13–21
Nov. 29	Seattle	L	17–27
Dec. 6	at Chicago	L	9–17
Dec. 13	at Tennessee	L	7–47
Dec. 20	Houston	L	13–16
Dec. 27	at Arizona	L	10–31
Jan. 3	San Francisco	L	6–28

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	Arizona	4:15 pm
Sept. 19	at Oakland	4:05 pm
Sept. 26	Washington	4:05 pm
Oct. 3	Seattle	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	at Detroit	1:00 pm
Oct. 17	San Diego	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	Carolina	1:00 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 14	at San Francisco	4:15 pm
Nov. 21	Atlanta	4:05 pm
Nov. 28	at Denver	4:15 pm
Dec. 5	at Arizona	4:15 pm
Dec. 12	at New Orleans	4:05 pm
Dec. 19	Kansas City	1:00 pm
Dec. 26	San Francisco	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	at Seattle	4:15 pm

san francisco 49ers

1 NFC WEST FORECAST

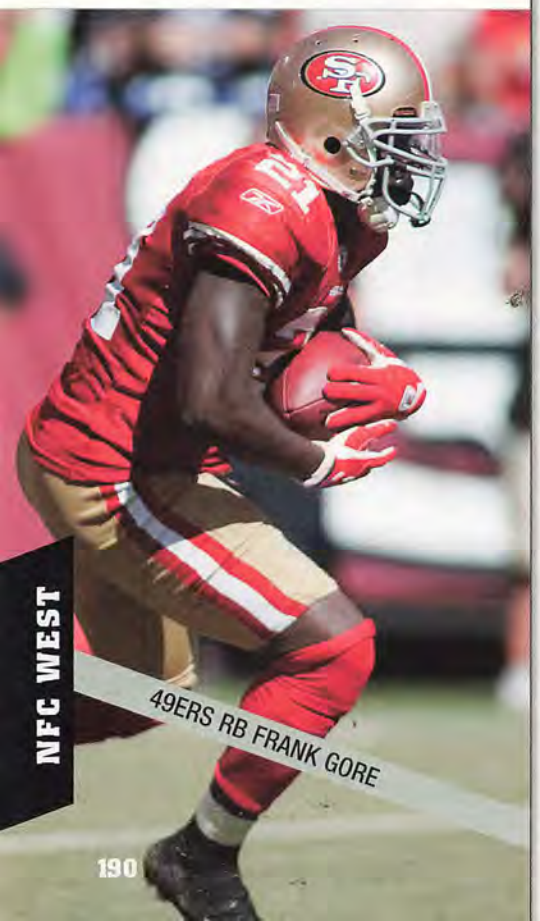
SAN FRANCISCO

THE ORGANIZATION

CO-CHAIRMEN: Denise York and John York
DIRECTOR OF PLAYER PERSONNEL: Trent Baalke
STADIUM: Candlestick Park (69,843)
SURFACE: Grass
WEBSITE: www.49ers.com
TICKETS: 415-656-4900
TRAINING CAMP: DeBartolo Sports Centre (Santa Clara, CA)

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	4
2006	7
2007	5
2008	7
2009	8



49ERS RB FRANK GORE

Willis, Gore: Peter Brouillet

In his first full season as 49ers coach, Mike Singletary succeeded in raising expectations. But it proved harder than he expected to fulfill them. For all of Singletary's fire-and-brimstone speeches — and there were plenty in 2009 — the 49ers improved by only one game and missed the playoffs for a seventh consecutive season. The postseason drought is a stunning development for a franchise that once considered anything short of a Super Bowl a disappointment. Getting back on the winning track will hinge largely on improved play from quarterback Alex Smith, the former No. 1 pick who enters 2010 as the unquestioned starter.

After going 5–1 against the NFC West, the 49ers believe the pieces are in place for a long-awaited playoff trip. They are so confident in their roster that they barely made a peep in free agency, reasoning that continuity and the infusion of a strong draft class will be enough to push them into the postseason for the first time since 2002.

COACHES Singletary and coordinator Jimmy Raye struggled all season to establish an offensive identity. They set out to be a smashmouth, run-oriented team, but the experiment failed so badly that players were begging the coaches to open things up by late November. There is pressure on Raye to be more creative, and he says the goal for 2010 is to establish a better run-to-pass ratio. Defensive coordinator Greg Manusky, who runs a traditional 3-4 scheme, continues to improve as a gameplanner. The 49ers were the only opponent to hold Peyton Manning without a touchdown pass — when Manning played the entire game — last season. They also sacked him three times, a rarity. Players love that Manusky doesn't try to get too fancy, which has cut down on confusion about assignments. **GRADE: C+**

QUARTERBACKS Smith, who lost his training camp battle to Shaun Hill last year, gets the starting job without a fight this time. Smith flashed potential last season by throwing 18 touchdown passes over the final 11 games. It helped that he was healthy for the first time since separating his throwing shoulder in 2007. Smith seems to see the field well only when operating out of the shotgun, which is why the 49ers moved toward a spread offense over the final month. The 49ers believe that back-to-back years with the same coordinator for the first time in his career will eliminate the tentativeness that Smith, at times, shows. There is no one breathing down his neck on the depth chart. The 49ers signed another former No. 1 pick, David Carr, as insurance. Second-year quarterback Nate Davis is still at least a year away. **GRADE: C**

RUNNING BACKS The only question mark surrounding Frank Gore is how much longer he can handle the pounding. He has four consecutive 1,000-yard seasons — a franchise first — but the heavy workload is a concern, especially because of his hard-nosed, between-the-tackles style. Gore can still flash his speed; he, Tennessee's Chris Johnson and Jacksonville's Maurice Jones-Drew were the only NFL players with three touchdown runs of 60 yards or longer last season. Niners executives have hinted at moving toward a multi-back system, but Gore is reluctant to share the load, reasoning that the more carries he gets, the better he runs. Glen Coffee and rookie Anthony Dixon are downhill runners like Gore, so the team still needs an elusive, outside running threat. Fullback Moran Norris, used as a lead blocker, has yet to duplicate the success of his 2006 season. **GRADE: B**

RECEIVERS No 49ers wideout has produced a 1,000-yard season since Terrell Owens in 2003. That streak could come to an end in Michael Crabtree's first full season. The No. 10 overall pick in '09 proved a quick study after ending his contract impasse last October, leading all rookies with 56.8 receiving yards per game. The 49ers can move Crabtree around the field now that he has had time to learn the playbook. Coaches want to get him the ball more often on slants to let him show the run-after-catch ability he demonstrated at Texas Tech. After Crabtree, it's a mixed bag. Josh Morgan, penciled in as the other starter, made only modest gains in his second season and topped 70 yards in a game only once. The 49ers added speedy but shaky-handed Ted Ginn Jr. in a trade with the Dolphins, hoping he can be a late bloomer as a deep threat. The 49ers' most accomplished pass-catcher is actually Vernon Davis. On the verge of being labeled a draft bust, Davis blew away franchise records for tight ends last season (78 catches for 965 yards). He cured his drops by staying after practice to catch balls shot out of a machine and showed better focus with help from Singletary's tough-love approach. Brandon Jones and Jason Hill will battle Ginn for playing time. Delanie Walker, a converted receiver, backs up Davis. **GRADE: B**

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN So glaring was the 49ers' need to upgrade their blocking that they opened their draft by taking Rutgers' Anthony Davis and Idaho's Mike Iupati, thus becoming just the third team since 1970 to use two first-round draft picks on linemen. Singletary wants an aggressive, physical unit capable of dominating short-yardage situations, but left tackle Joe Staley is their only

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Play Ball? Receiver Kyle Williams, a sixth-round pick from Arizona State, was a 47th–round selection by the Chicago White Sox in 2006 but didn't sign. That meant turning down his dad, GM Kenny Williams.

Mad Man If Mike Singletary doesn't make it as a coach, he can try Madison Avenue. The 49ers turned his press conference sound bites — "I want winners!" and the like — into a national award-winning ad campaign.

Protect This House Linebacker Manny Lawson, who got his industrial engineering degree at NC State, wants to design and build his own house when his playing days are over.

Multi-sport Star Tight end Vernon Davis served as an honorary captain for the U.S. Olympic Curling Team. He tried the sport during a Bay Area promotion and got so hooked he attended a few matches during the Vancouver Games.

Addition by Division In going 5–1 against the NFC West, the 49ers allowed only 10.2 points per game, the best mark in the NFL for a team against division opponents.

2009 STATS

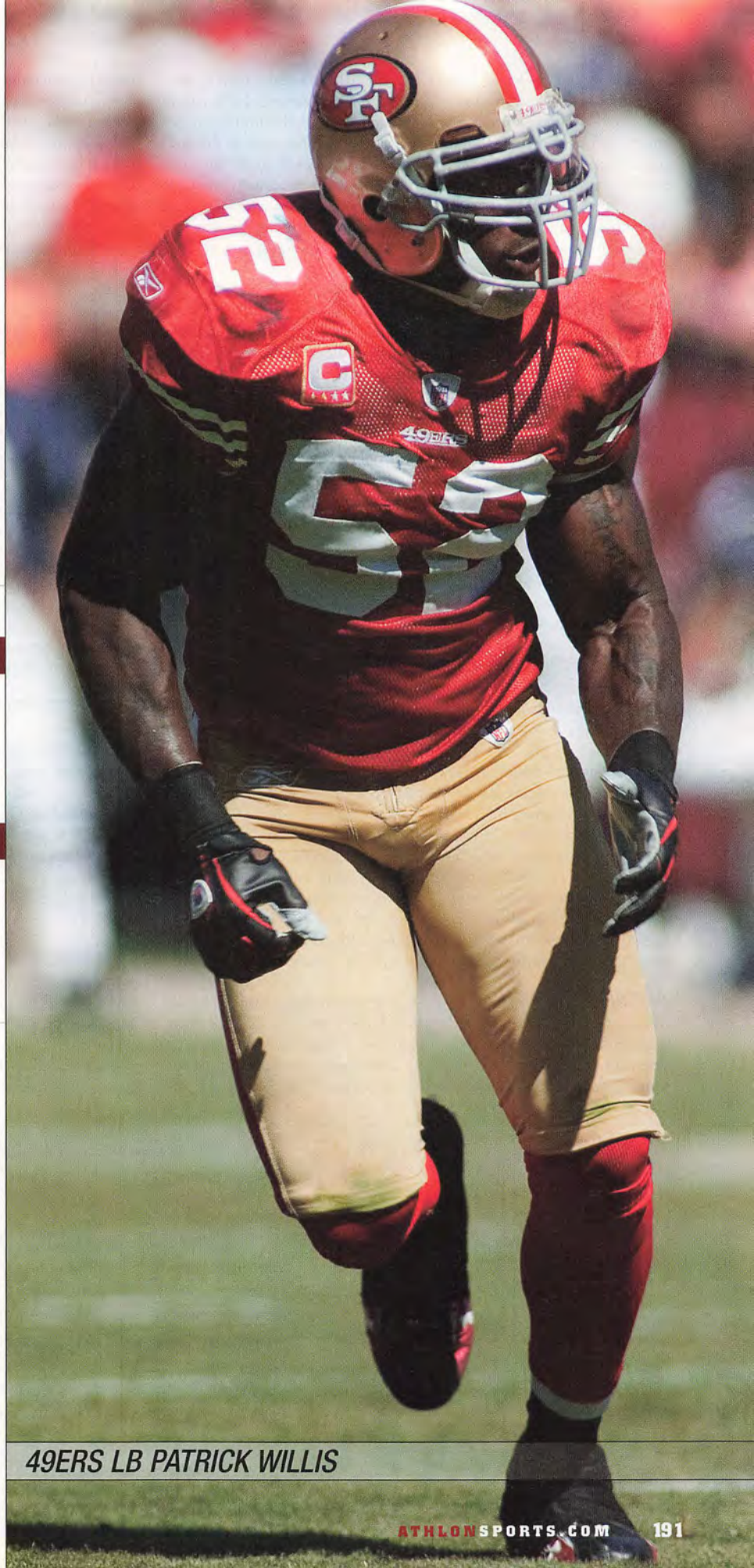
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	290.8	27	14
Rushing	100.0	25	12
Passing	190.8	22	13
Scoring	20.6	18	9
Punt Returns	4.4	32	16
Kick Returns	21.8	23	11
Red Zone TD %	59.0	5	3

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	326.4	15	8
Rushing	97.0	6	4
Passing	229.4	21	10
Scoring	17.6	4	2
Interceptions	18	T11	7
Sacks	44	T3	T2
Turnover Differential	+9	5	4

SCOUTING THE 49ers

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP SAN FRANCISCO

"Vernon Davis is just a superior athlete, and that separates him from everybody else. If he can keep his mind focused and keep improving his skills, he can be as good as any tight end in the league. … A lot remains to be seen with what happens with Alex Smith. Is he *the* guy and do they cater their offense to him, or are they still looking for a quarterback of the future? … When they've gone to more boot and waggle and moved the pocket, Smith has had a little more success. When they had him drop back and run the offense, he seemed to struggle a little more. … With Taylor Mays, they've got two big, active safeties. Mays could possibly be like (Arizona's) Adrian Wilson, that kind of player. … They added some strong, physical guys up front who will create some yards on the ground for Frank Gore. They addressed a huge need there. … Any team coached by Mike Singletary is going to be a contender in my opinion because of their attitude and toughness."



49ERS LB PATRICK WILLIS

dependable anchor. Right guard Chilo Rachal is a mauler with upside, but opponents used stunts to exploit his overaggressiveness. He'll have to be more disciplined. Center Eric Heitmann, entering his ninth year as a starter, isn't overpowering but is technically sound and serves as the line's unquestioned leader. Line coach Mike Solari has work to do with two rookies, but Davis and Iupati will probably start immediately, replacing Adam Snyder (right tackle) and David Baas (left guard), respectively. The most valuable backup is tackle Barry Sims, a 12th-year veteran who stepped in for an injured Staley last year and had his best season in years. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN Teammates consider nosetackle Aubrayo Franklin among the most underrated players in the NFL. In the 49ers' scheme, it's up to Franklin to play square and lateral on the line of scrimmage. They're not looking for Franklin to penetrate, just to hold the line of scrimmage and let the linebackers roam free. (Patrick Willis is among his biggest fans). The 49ers' front office recognized Franklin's value and designated him with the franchise tag. End Justin Smith, who used to line up all over, is now almost exclusively at right end and is coming off his best season as a 49er. With Franklin, Smith and Isaac Sopoaga leading the three-man line, the 49ers allowed opponents just 3.6 yards per carry, third in the NFL. The team has yet to get any production out of Kentwan Balmer, a first-round pick in 2008 who can play inside or outside but struggled to earn playing time. He finished last season on injured reserve because of a shoulder injury that further hampered his learning curve. Ricky Jean Francois, a seventh-round draft pick, might jump in front of Balmer on the depth chart. ***GRADE: B***

LINEBACKERS Willis gets better every year and ranks among the NFL's best defensive players. His sideline-to-sideline speed was never more impressive than when he chased down Johnson, the Titans' speedster, on several outside runs last November. The Vikings' Adrian Peterson says of Willis: "He's a freak. He's 245 and runs a 4.3. He's a perfect prototype for a linebacker." Willis has benefited tremendously from veteran inside linebacker Takeo Spikes. A heady player, Spikes showed he had plenty left in the tank during his 12th NFL season by registering 4.0 sacks, his best total since 2001. On the outside, the 49ers are still looking for a consistent pass-rusher; no 49er has recorded double-digit sacks since Andre Carter in 2002. Parys Haralson, Manny Lawson and Ahmad Brooks show occasional flashes, but none has been able to sustain the pressure over a full season. The 49ers signed veteran Travis LaBoy, who missed last season with a foot injury, in hopes that he can regain the form that made him a formidable presence with the Titans. ***GRADE: B+***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Injuries to Walt Harris (during summer workouts) and Nate Clements (in Week 8) left the 49ers short-handed in the secondary, which explains why opponents topped 300 passing yards seven times. Clements, 30, hopes to come back strong, but questions mount over whether he has lost a step — or two. Shawntae Spencer surprised by emerging as the team's best cover corner last season, holding his own in matchups against Arizona's Larry Fitzgerald and Houston's Andre Johnson. The 49ers hope Tarell Brown is ready for a more significant role. Free safety Dashon Goldson was the 49ers' breakout performer on defense last season, showing boundless range, a knack for being around the ball and, toward the end of the year, greater discipline. Safety Michael Lewis remains a solid all-around performer, but multiple concussions last season raise questions about his durability. Rookie Taylor Mays could press him for playing time. ***GRADE: C***

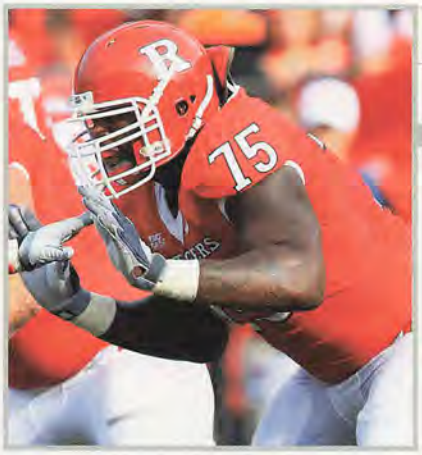
VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
David Carr	QB	N.Y. Giants	Arnaz Battle	WR	Pittsburgh
Ted Ginn Jr.	WR/KR	Miami	Shaun Hill	QB	Detroit
Travis LaBoy	LB	None	Marcus Hudson	CB	Carolina
Karl Paymah	CB	Minnesota	Tony Pashos	T	Cleveland
			Jeff Ulbrich	ILB	Retired

For the second consecutive offseason, the 49ers were only a minor player in free agency, adding role players and backups. The coaches believe that constant shuffling of starters, especially on offense, has given the team no chance at continuity or cohesion. Carr arrives as an insurance policy. He'll get a crack at the starting quarterback job only if Smith struggles badly. The player with the biggest chance at an impact is Ginn, who will be counted on to upgrade one of the NFL's worst return games. Anything he contributes as a receiver will be considered a bonus. None of the losses is a major blow.

SPECIALISTS Singletary showed little patience with the 49ers' struggling return game last season. Allen Rossum was waived at midseason, and special teams coach Al Everest was dismissed at season's end. The 49ers traded for Ginn to boost to the kick-return game, and he will get first crack at punt-return duty as well. The situation looks better in the kicking game, where punter Andy Lee led the NFC with a 47.6-yard gross average and made his second Pro Bowl. Veteran Joe Nedney's 86.8 percent field goal accuracy as a 49er is the best mark in franchise history. ***GRADE: B+***

FINAL ANALYSIS Though the 49ers lack the talent for a deep playoff run, they have enough to contend in a vulnerable NFC West. The defense has been postseason-worthy for several seasons, thanks to the emergence of Willis, so now it's up to the offense to hold up its part of the bargain. The front office has worked hard to equip Smith with the proper supporting cast — drafting Crabtree in '09 and two sturdy blockers in '10 — so there are no excuses left. It's time to perform.



Bruce Schwartzman

SAN FRANCISCO IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Anthony Davis	OT	6-5	323	Rutgers
1. Mike Iupati	G	6-5	331	Idaho
2. Taylor Mays	S	6-3	230	USC
3. Navorro Bowman	ILB	6-0	242	Penn State
6. Anthony Dixon	RB	6-1	233	Mississippi St.
6. Nate Byham	TE	6-4	268	Pittsburgh
6. Kyle Williams	WR	5-10	188	Arizona State
7. Phillip Adams	CB	5-10	192	S. Carolina St.

To build a team that fits Mike Singletary's philosophy, the 49ers put a priority on aggressive, physical players, starting from the top. First-round picks Davis and Iupati will be counted on to start as soon as possible. Davis, like some others in this group, comes with character concerns. He was in the doghouse at times while at Rutgers, and some scouts think his work ethic is shaky. But the 49ers think Singletary's motivational abilities (see: Davis, Vernon) will keep the kid focused. Niners coaches question how Mays was used at USC, where he often lined up 20 yards off the ball. The sleeper on this list is Williams, who has a chance to make an impact as a punt returner and slot receiver.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Carr, David	QB	6-3	216	8	Fresno State	FA-NYG-10	D1-Hou-02
7 Davis, Nate	QB	6-1	226	1	Ball State	D5b-09	D5b-SF-09
11 Smith, Alex	QB	6-4	217	5	Utah	D1-05	D1-SF-05

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33 Clayton, Thomas	RB	5-11	222	1	Kansas State	D6-07	D6-SF-07
29 Coffee, Glen	RB	6-0	209	1	Alabama	D3-09	D3-SF-09
21 Gore, Frank	RB	5-9	217	5	Miami	D3a-05	D3a-SF-05
47 Miller, Brit	FB	6-0	243	1	Illinois	W-Car-09	FA-Car-09
44 Norris, Moran	FB	6-1	250	9	Kansas	FA-09	D4-NO-01
24 Robinson, Michael	RB	6-1	223	4	Penn State	D4-06	D4-SF-06

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
88 Bruce, Isaac	WR	6-0	188	16	Memphis	FA-08	D2-StL-94
15 Crabtree, Michael	WR	6-1	214	1	Texas Tech	D1-09	D1-SF-09
85 Davis, Vernon	TE	6-3	250	4	Maryland	D1a-06	D1a-SF-06
49 Finley, Joe Jon	TE	6-6	251	1	Oklahoma	FA-08	FA-SF-08
19 Ginn Jr., Ted	WR	5-11	180	3	Ohio State	T-Mia-10	D1-Mia-07
89 Hill, Jason	WR	6-0	202	3	Washington State	D3a-07	D3a-SF-07
81 Jones, Brandon	WR	6-1	212	5	Oklahoma	FA-09	D3-Ten-05
84 Morgan, Josh	WR	6-0	219	2	Virginia Tech	D6-08	D6-SF-08
46 Walker, Delanie	TE	6-0	242	4	Central Missouri	D6a-06	D6a-SF-06
17 Zeigler, Dominique	WR	6-3	185	2	Baylor	FA-07	FA-SF-07

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
64 Baas, David	G	6-4	330	5	Michigan	D2-05	D2-SF-05
75 Boone, Alex	T	6-7	328	1	Ohio State	FA-09	FA-SF-09
66 Heitmann, Eric	C	6-3	312	8	Stanford	D7a-02	D7a-SF-02
61 Patrick, Chris	T	6-5	305	1	Nebraska	FA-09	FA-NYG-07
62 Rachal, Chilo	T/G	6-4	315	2	USC	D2-08	D2-SF-08
65 Sims, Barry	T	6-5	300	11	Utah	FA-08	FA-Oak-99
68 Snyder, Adam	T/G	6-6	325	5	Oregon	D3b-05	D3b-SF-05
74 Staley, Joe	T	6-5	315	3	Central Michigan	D1b-07	D1b-SF-07
59 Wallace, Cody	C	6-4	300	2	Texas A&M	D4-08	D4-SF-08
69 Wragge, Tony	G	6-4	310	5	New Mexico State	FA-05	FA-Ari-02

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
96 Balmer, Kentwan	DT	6-5	315	2	North Carolina	D1-08	D1-SF-08
93 Evans, Demetric	DT	6-4	275	8	Georgia	FA-09	FA-Dal-01
92 Franklin, Aubrayo	NT	6-1	317	7	Tennessee	FA-07	D5-Bal-03
95 Jean Francois, Ricky	DT	6-3	295	1	LSU	D7b-09	D7b-SF-09
91 McDonald, Ray	DT	6-3	290	3	Florida	D3b-07	D3b-SF-07
60 Mitchell, Khalif	DT	6-5	318	1	East Carolina	FA-09	FA-SF-09
94 Smith, Justin	DT	6-4	285	9	Missouri	FA-08	D1-Cin-01
90 Sopoaga, Isaac	DT	6-2	330	6	Hawaii	D4a-04	D4a-SF-04

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Briggs, Diyral	LB	6-4	230	1	Bowling Green	FA-09	FA-SF-09
55 Brooks, Ahmad	LB	6-3	259	4	Virginia	W-Cin-08	SD-Cin-06
58 Burnett, Martail	LB	6-3	262	1	Utah	FA-09	FA-Min-08
98 Haralson, Parys	LB	6-0	255	4	Tennessee	D5-06	D5-SF-06
LaBoy, Travis	LB	6-3	250	5	Hawaii	FA-10	D2-Ten-04
99 Lawson, Manny	LB	6-5	240	4	NC State	D1b-06	D1b-SF-06
56 McKillop, Scott	LB	6-1	244	1	Pittsburgh	D5a-09	D5a-SF-09
51 Spikes, Takeo	LB	6-2	242	12	Auburn	FA-08	D1-Cin-98
57 Wilhelm, Matt	LB	6-4	245	7	Ohio State	FA-09	D4-SD-03
52 Willis, Patrick	LB	6-1	240	3	Ole Miss	D1a-07	D1a-SF-07

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25 Brown, Tarell	CB	5-10	193	3	Texas	D5-07	D5-SF-07
22 Clements, Nate	CB	6-0	205	9	Ohio State	FA-07	D1-Buf-01
38 Goldson, Dashon	S	6-2	200	3	Washington	D4b-07	D4b-SF-07
32 Lewis, Michael	S	6-1	222	8	Colorado	FA-07	D2-Phi-02
Paymah, Karl	CB	6-0	195	4	Washington State	FA-Min-10	D3-Den-05
20 Smith, Keith	CB	5-11	191	6	McNeese State	FA-09	D3-Det-04
30 Smith, Reggie	S	6-1	200	2	Oklahoma	D3-08	D3-SF-08
36 Spencer, Shawntae	CB	6-1	190	6	Pittsburgh	D2b-04	D2b-SF-04
28 Taylor, Curtis	S	6-2	209	1	LSU	D7a-09	D7a-SF-09

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Andrus, Shane	K	5-10	190	1	Murray State	FA-09	FA-Ind-06
86 Jennings, Brian	LS	6-5	242	10	Arizona State	D7b-00	D7b-SF-00
4 Lee, Andy	P	6-2	180	6	Pittsburgh	D6a-04	D6a-SF-04
6 Nedney, Joe	K	6-5	234	14	San Jose State	FA-05	FA-Mia-96

Peter Brouillet

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Players
WR	15	Michael Crabtree
	81	Brandon Jones
WR	84	Josh Morgan
	19	Ted Ginn Jr.
LT	74	Joe Staley
	65	Barry Sims
LG	77	Mike Iupati (R)
	64	David Baas
C	66	Eric Heitmann
	59	Cody Wallace
RG	62	Chilo Rachal
	69	Tony Wragge
RT	76	Anthony Davis (R)
	68	Adam Snyder
TE	85	Vernon Davis
	46	Delanie Walker
QB	11	Alex Smith
		David Carr
FB	44	Moran Norris
	47	Brit Miller
RB	21	Frank Gore
	29	Glen Coffee

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Players
LE	90	Isaac Sopoaga
	95	Ricky Jean Francois
NT	92	Aubrayo Franklin
	90	Isaac Sopoaga
RE	94	Justin Smith
	91	Ray McDonald
OLB	99	Manny Lawson
	50	Diyral Briggs
ILB	51	Takeo Spikes
	56	Scott McKillop
ILB	52	Patrick Willis
	57	Matt Wilhelm
OLB	98	Parys Haralson
	55	Ahmad Brooks
CB	22	Nate Clements
		Karl Paymah
CB	36	Shawntae Spencer
	25	Tarell Brown
SS	32	Michael Lewis
	23	Taylor Mays (R)
FS	38	Dashon Goldson
	30	Reggie Smith

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Joe Nedney
KR	19	Ted Ginn Jr.
P	4	Andy Lee
PR	19	Ted Ginn Jr.

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Mike Singletary
Offensive Coordinator: Jimmy Raye
Defensive Coordinator: Greg Manusky
Special Teams Coordinator: Kurt Schottenheimer
Assistant Special Teams: Dave Fipp
Quarterbacks: Mike Johnson
Running Backs: Tom Rathman
Wide Receivers: Jerry Sullivan
Tight Ends: Pete Hoener
Offensive Line: Mike Solari
Defensive Line: Jim Tomsula
Outside Linebackers: Jason Tarver
Inside Linebackers: Vantz Singletary
Secondary: Vance Joseph
Secondary: Johnnie Lynn
Assistant Offensive Line: Ray Brown
Head Strength and Conditioning: Duane Carlisle
Asst. Strength and Conditioning: Mark Uyeyama

FANTASY FLASH

After scoring only nine touchdowns in his first three NFL seasons combined, tight end **Vernon Davis** tied for the league lead in receiving scores with Larry Fitzgerald and Randy Moss with 13. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(8–8)*

Sept. 13	at Arizona	W	20–16
Sept. 20	Seattle	W	23–10
Sept. 27	at Minnesota	L	24–27
Oct. 4	St. Louis	W	35– 0
Oct. 11	Atlanta	L	10–45
Oct. 25	at Houston	L	21–24
Nov. 1	at Indianapolis	L	14–18
Nov. 8	Tennessee	L	27–34
Nov. 12	Chicago	W	10– 6
Nov. 22	at Green Bay	L	24–30
Nov. 29	Jacksonville	W	20– 3
Dec. 6	at Seattle	L	17–20
Dec. 14	Arizona	W	24– 9
Dec. 20	at Philadelphia	L	13–27
Dec. 27	Detroit	W	20– 6
Jan. 3	at St. Louis	W	28– 6

2010 SCHEDULE

Sept. 12	at Seattle	4:15 pm
Sept. 20	New Orleans (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Sept. 26	at Kansas City	1:00 pm
Oct. 3	at Atlanta	1:00 pm
Oct. 10	Philadelphia	8:20 pm
Oct. 17	Oakland	4:05 pm
Oct. 24	at Carolina	1:00 pm
Oct. 31	Denver	1:00 pm
Week 9	BYE	
Nov. 14	St. Louis	4:15 pm
Nov. 21	Tampa Bay	4:05 pm
Nov. 29	at Arizona (Mon.)	8:30 pm
Dec. 5	at Green Bay	1:00 pm
Dec. 12	Seattle	4:05 pm
Dec. 16	at San Diego (Thu.)	8:20 pm
Dec. 26	at St. Louis	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	Arizona	4:15 pm

seattle SEAHAWKS

2 NFC WEST FORECAST

THE ORGANIZATION

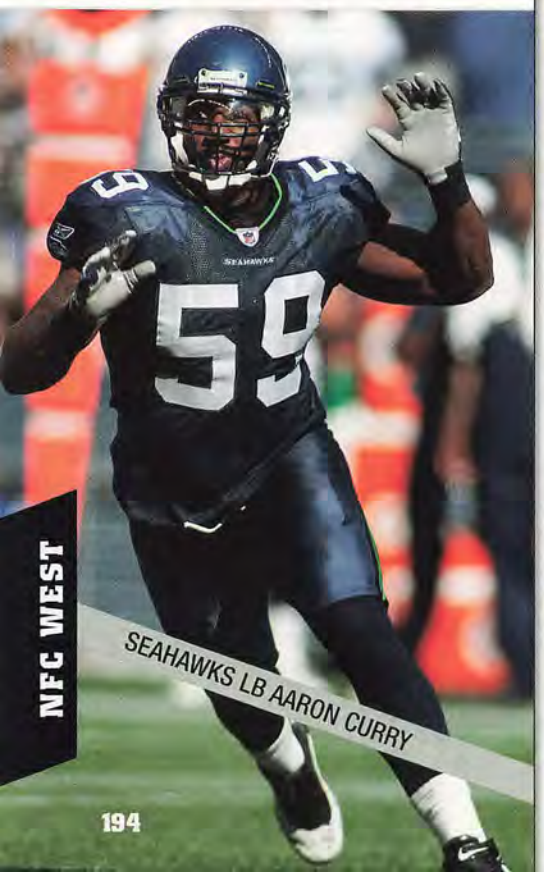
CHAIRMAN: Paul G. Allen
GENERAL MANAGER: John Schneider
STADIUM: Qwest Field (72,000)
SURFACE: Field Turf
WEBSITE: www.seahawks.com
TICKETS: 888-635-4295
TRAINING CAMP: Seahawks Training Facility (Renton, Wash.)

SEATTLE

Five-Year Win Trend

2005	13	
2006	9	PLAYOFFS
2007	10	PLAYOFFS
2008	4	
2009	5	

PLAYOFFS *Playoffs* *Conference Champion*



SEAHAWKS LB AARON CURRY

NFC WEST

After trying an unsuccessful handoff from Mike Holmgren to Jim Mora Jr. last year — Holmgren's 4–12 swan song was followed by Mora's 5–11 one-and-done — Seattle has gone for a complete makeover. The Seahawks brought in coach Pete Carroll and new general manager John Schneider to reconstruct the organization. As the third Seahawks coach in three years, Carroll immediately stressed the need for increased competition at every position. He brought in Charlie Whitehurst to challenge Matt Hasselbeck, traded for LenDale White and Leon Washington to ratchet up the running back battle, and directed a draft that could instantly yield three rookie starters.

Only five starters remain from the Super Bowl XL team, and Carroll wants to rebuild the franchise his way with young players who can compete immediately. But all that churn doesn't hide a thin roster that will take time to learn new schemes for a third straight season.

COACHES Carroll won two national titles and took USC to a record seven straight BCS bowl games in nine years in the college game, but none of that matters now. The 58-year-old wants to show he's a better NFL coach than the one who got fired after one season with the Jets and three with the Patriots in the 1990s. He brings some of the college spirit — an upbeat, high-energy approach — as well as a number of former Trojan assistants, including offensive coordinator Jeremy Bates. Bates, 33, has seven years of NFL experience, but this is his first coordinator post. He'll run a West Coast offense based largely on the Mike Shanahan system used in Denver, where he was an assistant from 2006-08. The running game will take its lead from veteran offensive line coach Alex Gibbs, a guru of the zone-blocking scheme. Defensive coordinator Casey Bradley, 43, is one of only two holdovers from Mora's staff. Bradley is a Monte Kiffin disciple who stresses an aggressive 4-3 scheme. Carroll plans to add some of the "elephant" position, a hybrid defensive end/linebacker employed often at USC, to add speed off the corner in passing situations. ***GRADE: B-***

QUARTERBACKS Carroll went out and got former Whitehurst, the Chargers' third-stringer, to increase the quarterback competition, but the job clearly remains Hasselbeck's for now. Hasselbeck has 11 years of experience in a similar West Coast offense run by Holmgren and is well suited for that game, though he might be asked to go downfield more this year. Injuries of his own and to the line have led to two straight down years, but given a decent surrounding cast, Hasselbeck, 34, has the savvy and ability to still be very productive. Whitehurst, 27, never threw a regular-season pass in four seasons behind Philip Rivers in San Diego, but he'll get every chance to develop as the heir apparent after signing a two-year, $8 million contract. Whitehurst has good size and arm strength but tended to force things into coverage in his college days at Clemson, so the question is whether he has been able to develop since then without the benefit of playing time. ***GRADE: B-***

RUNNING BACKS Third-year back Justin Forsett is a good fit in the zone-blocking run game and could emerge as a playmaker in the new offense. Forsett had a couple of breakout games when Julius Jones was hurt last season, though his size (5'8", 194) and inexperience leave him in a time-share situation with the newly acquired White and Washington. White is eager for a fresh start after gaining weight and losing playing time in Tennessee, and Washington also starts anew after breaking his leg in Week 7 with the Jets. Carroll likes to split time with his backs, so the three will likely divide duties. ***GRADE: C+***

RECEIVERS The Seahawks made a play for Brandon Marshall after losing Nate Burleson in free agency, but they didn't want to pay the ultimate price. Instead, they filled the void with second-round draft pick Golden Tate from Notre Dame. He'll provide a needed big-play threat in tandem with two veteran possession receivers — T.J. Houshmandzadeh and Deion Branch — who lack downfield speed. Second-year man Deon Butler could emerge as a vertical threat as well. John Carlson, while no burner, is capable of stretching defenses as an athletic tight end, though he was limited too often last season by the need to stay in to help bolster a shaky line. ***GRADE: C***

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN Left tackle Walter Jones missed the '09 season with a knee injury that ultimately led to his retirement. That leaves the Seahawks in a retooling mode, but the tools got a lot better with the addition of Oklahoma State's Russell Okung with the sixth pick in the draft. He's athletic enough to fit in well with Gibbs' new blocking scheme and should start protecting Hasselbeck's blind side immediately. Gibbs brought in veteran free agent left guard Ben Hamilton to help that transition. Hamilton is a veteran of Gibbs' system in Denver and will take

Curry: Peter Brouillet; Houshmandzadeh: Steve Dykes/US Presswire

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

Training Wheels Still On While some will compare Charlie Whitehurst to Matt Hasselbeck in terms of quarterbacks who paid their dues before getting their opportunities, Whitehurst will turn 28 this August and has yet to throw a regular-season NFL pass. When Hasselbeck turned 28 in September 2003, he had tossed 850 passes for the Packers and Seahawks.

Transition Five starters remain from the 2005 Super Bowl team: Hasselbeck, tackle Sean Locklear, cornerback Marcus Trufant and linebackers Lofa Tatupu and Leroy Hill. Three other current Seahawks were backups: center Chris Spencer, safety Jordan Babineaux and defensive tackle Craig Terrill.

He's Almost In One of the first things Carroll added at Seahawks headquarters was a big sign over the doorway leading to the practice field that says, "I'm in!" Players are supposed to tap the sign on their way out to remind themselves to focus and commit. By the second day of the team's initial minicamp, team trainers put a box next to the door and labeled it "Forsett's Stepstool" as a joke on running back Justin Forsett, generously listed at 5'8".

2009 STATS

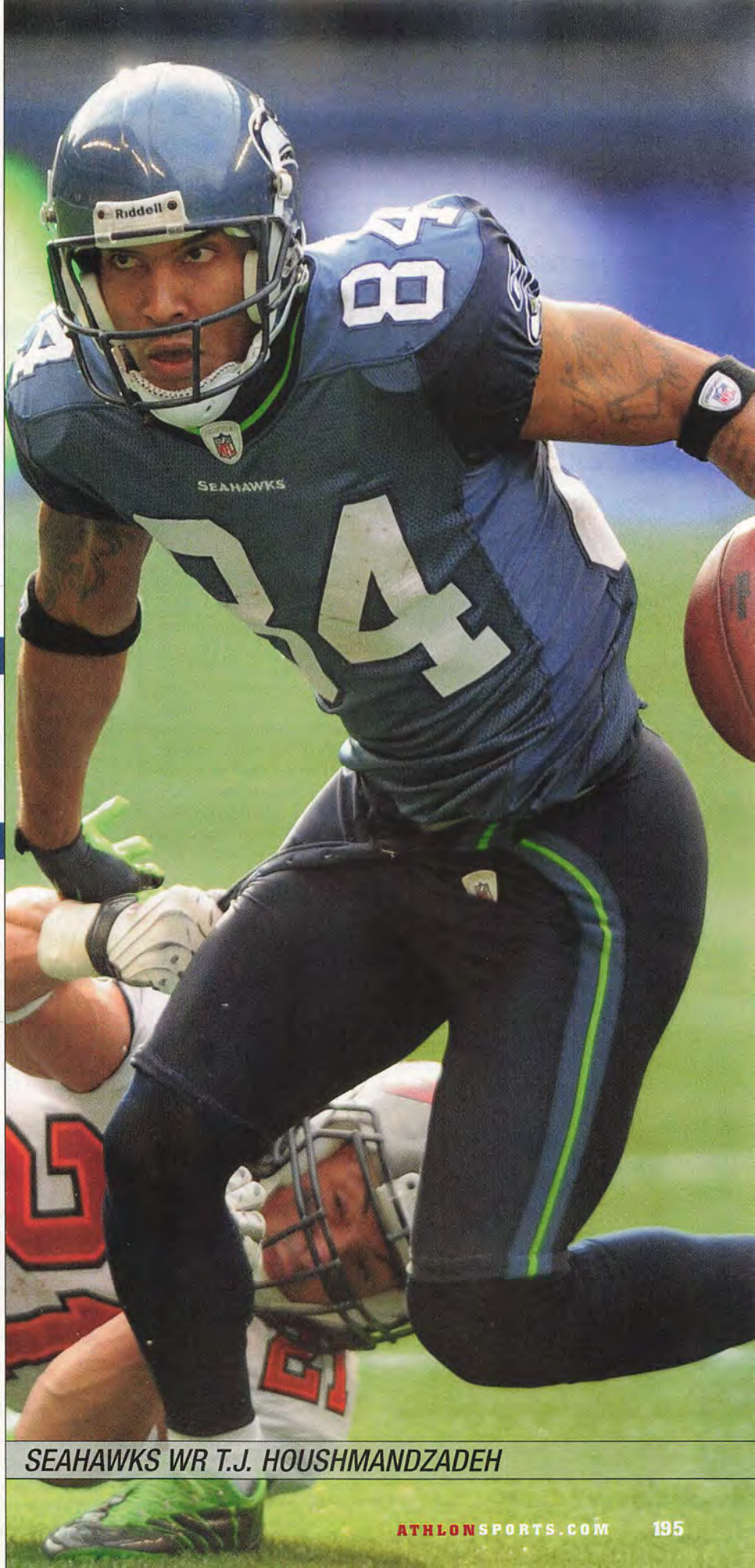
TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	316.8	21	10
Rushing	97.9	26	13
Passing	218.9	15	9
Scoring	17.5	25	12
Punt Returns	7.5	19	11
Kick Returns	21.9	T21	10
Red Zone TD %	39.6	30	15

TEAM DEFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	356.4	24	12
Rushing	111.0	15	8
Passing	245.4	30	15
Scoring	24.4	T25	12
Interceptions	13	T22	T9
Sacks	28	T26	T12
Turnover Differential	-8	T26	13

SCOUTING THE SEAHAWKS

NFL SCOUTS AND OPPOSING COACHES SIZE UP SEATTLE

"Adding Leon Washington and LenDale White was huge for them because running back was considered a weakness. That's a pretty good one-two pickup. … Russell Okung was huge in replacing Walter Jones, although no one will ever replace him. … Matt Hasselbeck's been pretty beat up. Between age and injuries and the trouble protecting him, it's a combination of everything. … I think Hasselbeck's got something left. His health is going to be important. … Lofa Tatupu has been hurt, but he's really an excellent, instinctive player. If he's back, he can be a dominant player. … Deion Branch is a pretty good player, but he's never stepped up to the big time. … I think Pete Carroll will look back on his experiences early when he was an NFL coach, recognize that the league has changed since he was out and also recognize he probably made some mistakes. Sometimes going through a tough experience and not having success makes you much wiser."



SEAHAWKS WR T.J. HOUSHMANDZADEH

Okung under his wing, as he did in helping Broncos first-round pick Ryan Clady make the Pro Bowl a year ago. Sean Locklear struggled at left tackle last year in Jones' absence but should be better back on the right side. Second-year man Max Unger is a solid building block at right guard. He had taken over from Chris Spencer at center in the final weeks of 2009, but Gibbs likes Spencer's athleticism in the middle and has flip-flopped those two back to their original positions. ***GRADE: C***

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN In search of a pass rush, Carroll brought in former Eagles speed rusher Chris Clemons and will use him, along with linebacker Aaron Curry, at times in the stand-up "elephant" position. At 240 pounds, Clemons couldn't win the every-down job with the Eagles and figures to struggle against power-running teams. That puts added pressure on 2008 first-round draft pick Lawrence Jackson to be more stout against the run. Jackson has tended to wear down quickly in his first two years in the league, but he is the only one of Seattle's top four defensive ends to return as Patrick Kerney retired, Darryl Tapp was traded to Philadelphia for Clemons, and Cory Redding signed with Baltimore. Tackles Brandon Mebane and Colin Cole are good run-stuffers but combined for only 1.5 sacks last season on a unit that must get pressure on quarterbacks to help a thin secondary. ***GRADE: C-***

LINEBACKERS With Lofa Tatupu back in the middle after missing 10 games with a torn pectoral muscle last year, this is the Seahawks' strongest unit. Tatupu is flanked by Leroy Hill and Curry, the fourth pick in the 2009 draft. Curry struggled after Tatupu went out last year but will be a force with a rare combination of size (6'2", 254) and the speed to run with most running backs. He struggled in space and zone coverages last year but will be allowed to use his natural instincts more as a pass-rusher. Tatupu's size (6'0", 242) makes him vulnerable to getting locked up by offensive linemen, so he needs the defensive front to occupy blockers and let him flow to the ball to be most effective. Third-year pro David Hawthorne filled in well for Tatupu last season and seems athletic enough to play outside, which could be needed if Hill winds up facing disciplinary action from the league following a domestic violence charge on the heels of a marijuana bust. ***GRADE: A-***

DEFENSIVE BACKS Marcus Trufant, a Pro Bowl corner in 2007, is healthy again after missing all of camp and the first six games with a back injury last season and then struggling upon his return. Trufant is the best cover man in a secondary in which fellow corners Josh Wilson and Kelly Jennings are both undersized. Jordan Babineaux moves to strong safety in place of released starter Deon Grant, allowing first-round draft pick Earl Thomas to roam as a ballhawking free safety. Thomas has the cover skills to take slot receivers one-on-one and should greatly help the pass defense. Babineaux, however, has never been a run-stuffer in the box and might eventually be challenged by Kam Chancellor, a big fifth-round draft pick out of Virginia Tech who is more of a downhill stopper. ***GRADE: C-***

SPECIALISTS It might speak to the problems of the rest of the team, but kicker Olindo Mare and punter Jon Ryan were considered by many to be the team's two MVPs in 2009. Mare hit his last 21 field goals (24-of-26 overall) and remains one of the league's best kickoff men, and Ryan averaged 46.2 yards per punt. If Washington can return from his broken leg, he'll ably fill the return hole created by Burleson's departure. Tate figures in the return game as well. ***GRADE: B***

VETERAN PLAYER MOVEMENT

KEY ADDITIONS			KEY LOSSES		
PLAYER	POS.	2009 TEAM	PLAYER	POS.	2010 TEAM
Chris Baker	TE	New England	Nate Burleson	WR	Detroit
Chris Clemons	DE	Philadelphia	Deon Grant	S	N.Y. Giants
Ben Hamilton	G/C	Denver	Justin Griffith	FB	Free agent
Robert Henderson	DE	Detroit	Walter Jones	LT	Retired
Ruvell Martin	WR	St. Louis	Patrick Kerney	DE	Retired
Matt McCoy	LB	Tampa Bay	Lance Laury	LB	N.Y. Jets
Sean Morey	WR	Arizona	Ken Lucas	CB	Free agent
Kevin Vickerson	DT	Tennessee	Cory Redding	DE	Baltimore
Leon Washington	RB	N.Y. Jets	Rob Sims	G	Detroit
LenDale White	RB	Tennessee	Darryl Tapp	DE	Philadelphia
Charlie Whitehurst	QB	San Diego	Seneca Wallace	QB	Cleveland

The Seahawks were as active as any team in the offseason, primarily picking up role players to fill holes on a roster undergoing considerable churn. Draft-day trades for Washington and White upgraded the running back competition significantly, and Whitehurst gives the team a potential quarterback of the future, though he remains a question given his total lack of NFL experience. Clemons will be given a shot at defensive end as the Seahawks search for a pass rush. The most important addition might turn out to be Hamilton, who will mentor rookie left tackle Russell Okung.

FINAL ANALYSIS Clearly, this is a rebuilding year for the Seahawks. Carroll's gung-ho style will be tested by the realities of a roster very thin on talent on both lines and in the secondary. A very good draft certainly helped, and Carroll says he's not afraid to play rookies, but just as Curry struggled at times last year, the first-year additions will need time to adjust. The team brought in a lot of veterans through trades and free agency, but most are role players without established track records of success. And yet they must step up. That said, Hasselbeck is the only veteran quarterback in a transitioning NFC West, and if the Seahawks can keep him upright and develop the attacking style of defense they're pursuing, they should win some division games. But big improvement is probably still a year away.

Patrick Hagerty

SEATTLE IN THE DRAFT

RD PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1. Russell Okung	OT	6-5	307	Oklahoma State
1. Earl Thomas	S	5-10	208	Texas
2. Golden Tate	WR	5-10	199	Notre Dame
4. Walter Thurmond	CB	5-11	189	Oregon
4. E.J. Wilson	DE	6-4	286	North Carolina
5. Kam Chancellor	S	6-3	231	Virginia Tech
6. Anthony McCoy	TE	6-4	259	USC
7. Dexter Davis	DE	6-1	244	Arizona State
7. Jameson Konz	WR	6-3	227	Kent State

The draft fell perfectly for the Seahawks to fill huge needs, and Okung and Thomas are both penciled in for immediate starting roles. Okung replaces Walter Jones, one of the best left tackles in the NFL in recent years. Thomas is a needed ballhawking safety for a team that was 30th in the NFL in pass defense and made few big plays in 2009. Tate figures to play a major role as an offensive playmaker and a nice complement to T.J. Houshmandzadeh. Thurmond, Wilson, Chancellor and Davis all are likely to win backup jobs, though Thurmond must recover from knee surgery. Pete Carroll loves the potential of McCoy, while Konz is a freakish athlete who is a raw, long-term project.

2010 VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Hasselbeck, Matt	QB	6-4	225	11	Boston College	T-GB-01	D6-GB-98
	Reilly, Mike	QB	6-3	212	1	Central Washington	W-StL-10	FA-Pit-09
14	Teel, Mike	QB	6-3	230	1	Rutgers	D6-09	D6-Sea-09
6	Whitehurst, Charlie	QB	6-4	220	4	Clemson	T-SD-10	D3-SD-06

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
20	Forsett, Justin	RB	5-8	194	2	California	D7a-08	D7a-Sea-08
32	Ganther, Quinton	RB	5-9	214	2	Utah	FA-Was-10	D7-Ten-06
22	Jones, Julius	RB	5-10	208	6	Notre Dame	FA-Dal-08	D2-Dal-04
43	Powdrell, Ryan	FB	5-11	254	2	USC	FA-10	FA-GB-07
40	Rankin, Louis	RB	6-1	205	2	Washington	FA-09	FA-Oak-08
35	Schmitt, Owen	FB	6-2	247	2	West Virginia	D5-08	D5-Sea-08
30	Washington, Leon	RB	5-8	195	4	Florida State	T-NYJ-10	D4b-NYJ-06
24	White, LenDale	RB	6-1	235	4	USC	T-Ten-10	D2-Ten-06

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
86	Baker, Chris	TE	6-3	258	8	Michigan State	FA-NE-10	D3-NYJ-02
83	Branch, Deion	WR	5-9	192	8	Louisville	T-NE-06	D2-NE-02
11	Butler, Deon	WR	5-10	182	1	Penn State	D3-09	D3-Sea-09
89	Carlson, John	TE	6-5	251	2	Notre Dame	D2-08	D2-Sea-08
18	Hass, Mike	WR	6-1	206	3	Oregon State	FA-09	D6-NO-06
84	Houshmandzadeh, T.J.	WR	6-2	203	9	Oregon State	FA-Cin-09	D7-Cin-01
19	Jones, Mike	WR	6-4	212	1	Arizona State	FA-09	FA-Hou-09
82	Martin, Ruvell	WR	6-4	220	4	Saginaw Valley St.	FA-StL-10	FA-SD-04
88	Morrah, Cameron	TE	6-3	244	1	California	D7c-09	D7c-Sea-09
17	Morey, Sean	WR	5-11	193	8	Brown	FA-Ari-10	D7-NE-99
87	Obomanu, Ben	WR	6-0	206	4	Auburn	D7b-06	D7b-Sea-06

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72	Frye, Brandon	T	6-4	305	3	Virginia Tech	W-Mia-09	D5-Hou-07
64	Gibson, Mike	G	6-3	305	2	California	PS-Phi-09	D6-Phi-08
50	Hamilton, Ben	G/C	6-4	290	9	Minnesota	FA-Den-10	D4a-Den-01
75	Locklear, Sean	T	6-4	308	6	NC State	D3-04	D3-Sea-04
77	McIntosh, Damion	T	6-4	320	10	Kansas State	FA-09	D3-SD-00
65	Spencer, Chris	C	6-3	312	5	Ole Miss	D1-05	D1-Sea-05
	Toledo, Joe	T	6-5	330	1	Washington	FA-10	D4-Mia-06
60	Unger, Max	G/C	6-5	309	1	Oregon	D2-09	D2-Sea-09
69	Vallos, Steve	C	6-3	312	3	Wake Forest	D7-07	D7-Sea-07
74	Willis, Ray	T/G	6-6	315	5	Florida State	D4-05	D4-Sea-05
66	Wrotto, Mansfield	G	6-3	320	3	Georgia Tech	D4b-07	D4b-Sea-07

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
79	Bryant, Red	DT	6-4	318	2	Texas A&M	D4-08	D4-Sea-08
91	Clemons, Chris	DE	6-2	240	6	Georgia	T-Phi-10	FA-Was-03
90	Cole, Colin	DT	6-1	330	7	Iowa	FA-GB-09	FA-Min-03
99	Henderson, Robert	DE	6-3	278	2	Southern Miss	T-Det-10	D6-NYG-08
95	Jackson, Lawrence	DE	6-4	271	2	USC	D1-08	D1-Sea-08
92	Mebane, Brandon	DT	6-1	301	3	California	D3-07	D3-Sea-07
98	Reed, Nick	DE	6-1	247	1	Oregon	D7b-09	D7b-Sea-09
93	Terrill, Craig	DT	6-2	295	6	Purdue	D6-04	D6-Sea-04
	Vickerson, Kevin	DT	6-5	305	4	Michigan State	T-Ten-10	D7-Mia-05

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
59	Curry, Aaron	LB	6-2	254	1	Wake Forest	D1-09	D1-Sea-09
57	Hawthorne, David	LB	6-0	240	2	TCU	FA-08	FA-Sea-08
54	Herring, Will	LB	6-3	243	3	Auburn	D5-07	D5-Sea-07
53	Heygood, Anthony	LB	6-1	232	1	Purdue	FA-09	FA-Sea-09
56	Hill, Leroy	LB	6-1	238	5	Clemson	D3b-05	D3b-Sea-05
52	McCoy, Matt	LB	6-0	235	5	San Diego State	FA-TB-10	D2-Phi-05
51	Tatupu, Lofa	LB	6-0	242	5	USC	D2-05	D2-Sea-05

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25	Adams, Jamar	FS	6-2	212	2	Michigan	FA-08	FA-Sea-08
27	Babineaux, Jordan	SS	6-0	206	6	Southern Arkansas	FA-04	FA-Sea-04
39	Cox, Kennard	CB	6-0	197	2	Pittsburgh	FA-10	FA-Buf-08
21	Jennings, Kelly	CB	5-11	180	4	Miami	D1-06	D1-Sea-06
34	Lewis, Roy	CB	5-10	190	2	Washington	FA-09	FA-Pit-08
36	Milloy, Lawyer	S	6-0	216	14	Washington	FA-09	D2-NE-96
41	Teal, Quinton	S	6-1	187	3	Coastal Carolina	FA-Car-10	FA-Car-07
23	Trufant, Marcus	CB	5-11	197	7	Washington State	D1-03	D1-Sea-03
26	Wilson, Josh	CB	5-9	192	3	Maryland	D2-07	D2-Sea-07

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10	Mare, Olindo	K	5-11	190	14	Syracuse	FA-08	FA-NYG-96
48	Overton, Matt	LS	6-0	254	1	W. Washington	FA-10	FA-Sea-07
9	Ryan, Jon	P	6-0	222	4	Regina	FA-08	FA-GB-06

Steve Dykes/US Presswire

PROJECTED DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
WR	84	T.J. Houshmandzadeh
	11	Deon Butler
WR	81	Golden Tate (R)
	83	Deion Branch
LT	76	Russell Okung (R)
	74	Ray Willis
LG	50	Ben Hamilton
	64	Mike Gibson
C	65	Chris Spencer
	69	Steve Vallos
RG	60	Max Unger
	66	Mansfield Wrotto
RT	75	Sean Locklear
	74	Ray Willis
TE	89	John Carlson
	86	Chris Baker
QB	8	Matt Hasselbeck
	6	Charlie Whitehurst
FB	35	Owen Schmitt
	43	Ryan Powdrell
RB	20	Justin Forsett
	24	LenDale White

DEFENSE

Pos.	No.	Player
DE	91	Chris Clemons
	58	Dexter Davis (R)
DT	92	Brandon Mebane
	93	Craig Terrill
DT	90	Colin Cole
	79	Red Bryant
DE	95	Lawrence Jackson
	97	E.J. Wilson (R)
OLB	56	Leroy Hill
	54	Will Herring
MLB	51	Lofa Tatupu
	57	David Hawthorne
OLB	59	Aaron Curry
	52	Matt McCoy
CB	23	Marcus Trufant
	21	Kelly Jennings
CB	26	Josh Wilson
	28	Walter Thurmond (R)
SS	27	Jordan Babineaux
	31	Kam Chancellor (R)
FS	29	Earl Thomas (R)
	25	Jamar Adams

SPECIALISTS

K	10	Olindo Mare
KR	30	Leon Washington
P	9	Jon Ryan
PR	81	Golden Tate (R)

(R) denotes rookie

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach: Pete Carroll
Offensive Coordinator: Jeremy Bates
Defensive Coordinator: Casey Bradley
Special Teams: Brian Schneider
Quarterbacks: Jedd Fisch
Running Backs: Sherman Smith
Wide Receivers: Kippy Brown
Tight Ends: Pat McPherson
Offensive Line: Alex Gibbs
Assistant Offensive Line: Art Valero
Quality Control — Offense: Dave Canales
Defensive Line: Dan Quinn
Linebackers: Ken Norton, Jr.
Secondary: Jerry Gray
Assistant Defensive Backs: Kris Richard
Quality Control — Defense: Rocky Seto
Defensive Assistant: Mike Phair
Head Strength and Conditioning: Chris Carlisle

FANTASY FLASH

In his second season in the league, tight end **John Carlson** scored more receiving touchdowns (seven) than the team's top two wide receivers combined. Nate Burleson and T.J. Houshmandzadeh each had three. *For the best in fantasy games and analysis, go to* **AthlonSports.com/Fantasy.**

2009 RESULTS *(5–11)*

Sept. 13	St. Louis	W	28– 0
Sept. 20	at San Francisco	L	10–23
Sept. 27	Chicago	L	19–25
Oct. 4	at Indianapolis	L	17–34
Oct. 11	Jacksonville	W	41– 0
Oct. 18	Arizona	L	3–27
Nov. 1	at Dallas	L	17–38
Nov. 8	Detroit	W	32–20
Nov. 15	at Arizona	L	20–31
Nov. 22	at Minnesota	L	9–35
Nov. 29	at St. Louis	W	27–17
Dec. 6	San Francisco	W	20–17
Dec. 13	at Houston	L	7–34
Dec. 20	Tampa Bay	L	7–24
Dec. 27	at Green Bay	L	10–48
Jan. 3	Tennessee	L	13–17

2010 SCHEDULE

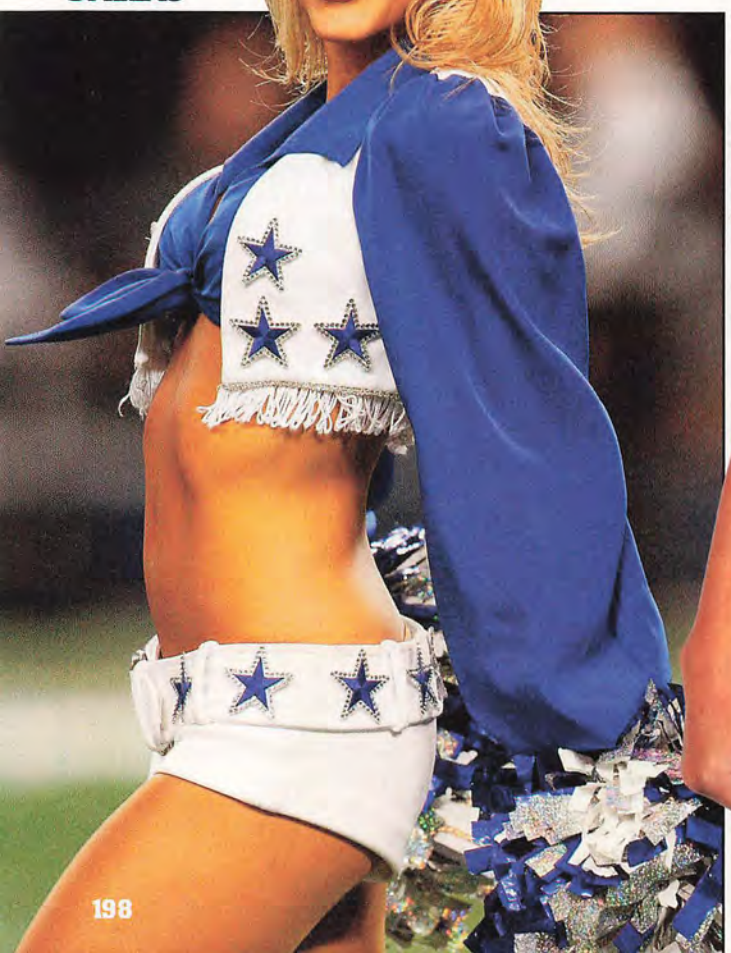
Sept. 12	San Francisco	4:15 pm
Sept. 19	at Denver	4:05 pm
Sept. 26	San Diego	4:15 pm
Oct. 3	at St. Louis	1:00 pm
Week 5	BYE	
Oct. 17	at Chicago	1:00 pm
Oct. 24	Arizona	4:05 pm
Oct. 31	at Oakland	4:15 pm
Nov. 7	N.Y. Giants	4:05 pm
Nov. 14	at Arizona	4:15 pm
Nov. 21	at New Orleans	4:05 pm
Nov. 28	Kansas City	4:05 pm
Dec. 5	Carolina	4:15 pm
Dec. 12	at San Francisco	4:05 pm
Dec. 19	Atlanta	4:05 pm
Dec. 26	at Tampa Bay	1:00 pm
Jan. 2	St. Louis	4:15 pm

SIDELINE SHOW

JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville: Newman Lowrance/Getty Images; Miami: Miami Dolphins; Dallas: Ronald Martinez/Getty Images
Denver: Peter Brouillet; Cincinnati: Ric Fogel; Philadelphia: Hunter Martin/Getty Images

DALLAS



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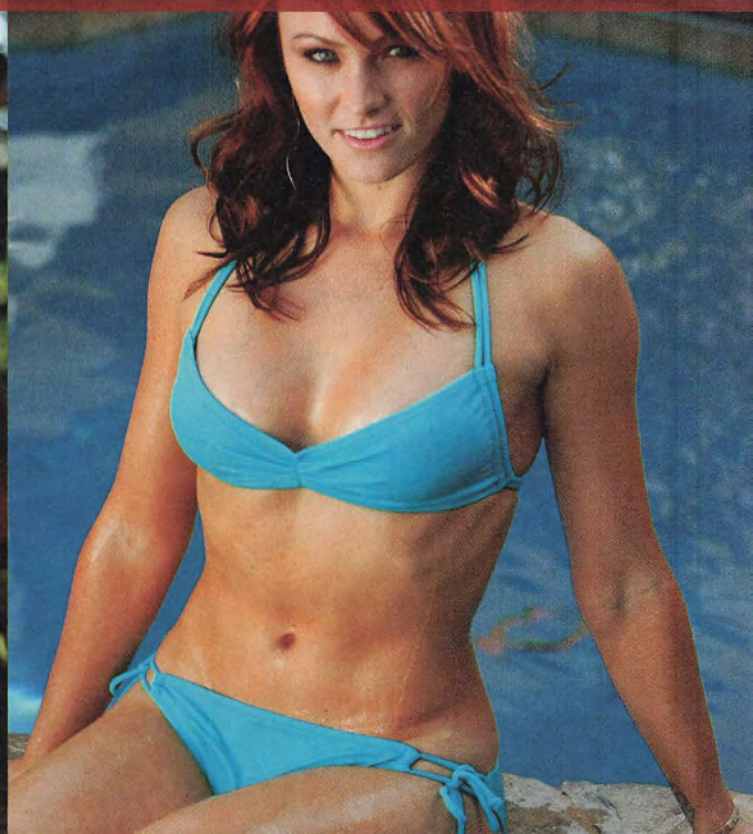

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GRAND PRIZE 1ST RUNNER-UP - TRIP FOR TWO TO LAS VEGAS TO WATCH THE BIG GAME IN FEBRUARY 2011
GRAND PRIZE 2ND RUNNER-UP - AUTOGRAPHED JERSEY OR FULL SIZE HELMET FROM THE PLAYER OF THE WINNER'S CHOICE
1ST PLACE - JERSEY AND HAT FROM THE TEAM OF THE WINNER'S CHOICE
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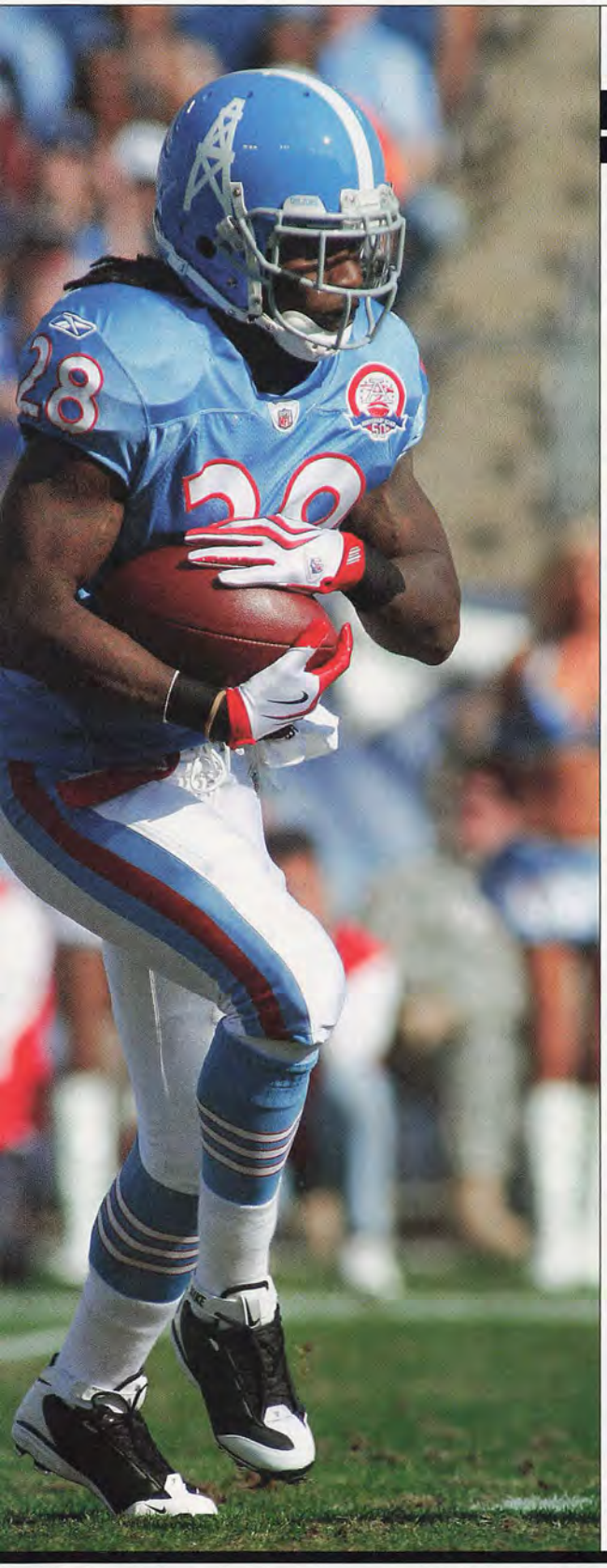
FANTASY FOOTBALL 2010 PREVIEW

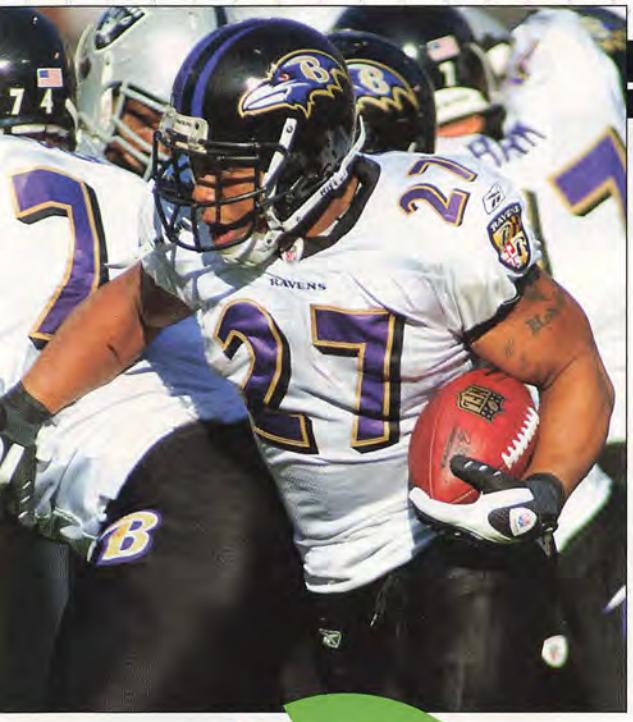


OVERALL TOP 200

Rk.	Player, Team	Pos.	Bye	Rk.	Player, Team	Pos.	Bye
1.	Chris Johnson, TEN	RB	9	51.	Tony Romo, DAL	QB	4
2.	Ray Rice, BAL	RB	8	52.	Ben Tate*, HOU	RB	7
3.	Maurice Jones-Drew, JAC	RB	9	53.	Donald Driver, GB	WR	10
4.	Adrian Peterson, MIN	RB	4	54.	Joseph Addai, IND	RB	7
5.	Andre Johnson, HOU	WR	7	55.	Dwayne Bowe, KC	WR	4
6.	Brandon Marshall, MIA	WR	5	56.	Steve Smith, CAR	WR	6
7.	Frank Gore, SF	RB	9	57.	C.J. Spiller*, BUF	RB	6
8.	Larry Fitzgerald, ARI	WR	6	58.	Jermichael Finley, GB	TE	10
9.	Calvin Johnson, DET	WR	7	59.	Dez Bryant*, DAL	WR	4
10.	Steven Jackson, STL	RB	9	60.	Kenny Britt, TEN	WR	9
11.	Michael Turner, ATL	RB	8	61.	Tim Hightower, ARI	RB	6
12.	LeSean McCoy, PHI	RB	8	62.	Hines Ward, PIT	WR	5
13.	Roddy White, ATL	WR	8	63.	Mike Sims-Walker, JAC	WR	9
14.	Shonn Greene, NYJ	RB	7	64.	Darren McFadden, OAK	RB	10
15.	Rashard Mendenhall, PIT	RB	5	65.	Jay Cutler, CHI	QB	8
16.	Ryan Mathews*, SD	RB	10	66.	Brett Favre, MIN	QB	4
17.	Matt Forté, CHI	RB	8	67.	Joe Flacco, BAL	QB	8
18.	Knowshon Moreno, DEN	RB	9	68.	Percy Harvin, MIN	WR	4
19.	Cedric Benson, CIN	RB	6	69.	Ricky Williams, MIA	RB	5
20.	Sidney Rice, MIN	WR	4	70.	Fred Jackson, BUF	RB	6
21.	DeAngelo Williams, CAR	RB	6	71.	Marion Barber, DAL	RB	4
22.	Jonathan Stewart, CAR	RB	6	72.	Ahmad Bradshaw, NYG	RB	8
23.	Pierre Thomas, NO	RB	10	73.	Ronnie Brown, MIA	RB	5
24.	Beanie Wells, ARI	RB	6	74.	Jahvid Best*, DET	RB	7
25.	Drew Brees, NO	QB	10	75.	Thomas Jones, KC	RB	4
26.	Felix Jones, DAL	RB	4	76.	Brandon Jacobs, NYG	RB	8
27.	Ryan Grant, GB	RB	10	77.	Santana Moss, WSH	WR	9
28.	Miles Austin, DAL	WR	4	78.	Austin Collie, IND	WR	7
29.	Aaron Rodgers, GB	QB	10	79.	Brent Celek, PHI	TE	8
30.	Anquan Boldin, BAL	WR	8	80.	Mike Wallace, PIT	WR	5
31.	Randy Moss, NE	WR	5	81.	Tony Gonzalez, ATL	TE	8
32.	Dallas Clark, IND	TE	7	82.	Kellen Winslow, TB	TE	4
33.	Antonio Gates, SD	TE	10	83.	Donald Brown, IND	RB	7
34.	Reggie Wayne, IND	WR	7	84	Montario Hardesty*, CLE	RB	8
35.	Michael Crabtree, SF	WR	9	85.	Reggie Bush, NO	RB	10
36.	Greg Jennings, GB	WR	10	86.	Jerome Harrison, CLE	RB	8
37.	Chad Ochocinco, CIN	WR	6	87.	Donovan McNabb, WSH	QB	9
38.	Vernon Davis, SF	TE	9	88.	Steve Slaton, HOU	RB	7
39.	Steve Smith, NYG	WR	8	89.	Laurence Maroney, NE	RB	5
40.	Marques Colston, NO	WR	10	90.	Chris Cooley, WSH	TE	9
41.	Peyton Manning, IND	QB	7	91.	Carson Palmer, CIN	QB	6
42.	Philip Rivers, SD	QB	10	92.	Eli Manning, NYG	QB	8
43.	DeSean Jackson, PHI	WR	8	93.	Kevin Smith, DET	RB	7
44.	Vincent Jackson, SD	WR	10	94.	Braylon Edwards, NYJ	WR	7
45.	Tom Brady, NE	QB	5	95.	Matt Ryan, ATL	QB	8
46.	Jason Witten, DAL	TE	4	96.	T.J. Houshmandzadeh, SEA	WR	5
47.	Jeremy Maclin, PHI	WR	8	97.	Kevin Kolb, PHI	QB	8
48.	Jamaal Charles, KC	RB	4	98.	Pierre Garcon, IND	WR	7
49.	Matt Schaub, HOU	QB	7	99.	Ben Roethlisberger, PIT	QB	5
50.	Hakeem Nicks, NYG	WR	8	100.	Santonio Holmes, NYJ	WR	7

*Rookie

Johnson: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports; Rice: Peter Brouillet



OVERALL TOP 200

Rk.	Player, Team	Pos.	Bye
101.	Chester Taylor, CHI	RB	8
102.	Cadillac Williams, TB	RB	4
103.	Marshawn Lynch, BUF	RB	6
104.	Robert Meachem, NO	WR	10
105.	Owen Daniels, HOU	TE	7
106.	Zach Miller, OAK	TE	10
107.	Derrick Mason, BAL	WR	8
108.	Johnny Knox, CHI	WR	8
109.	Chad Henne, MIA	QB	5
110.	Toby Gerhart*, MIN	RB	4
111.	Mark Sanchez, NYJ	QB	7
112.	Steve Breaston, ARI	WR	6
113.	Matthew Stafford, DET	QB	7
114.	Heath Miller, PIT	TE	5
115.	LenDale White, SEA	RB	5
116.	Clinton Portis, WSH	RB	9
117.	Alex Smith, SF	QB	9
118.	Dexter McCluster*, KC	WR/RB	4
119.	Darren Sproles, SD	RB	10
120.	LaDainian Tomlinson, NYJ	RB	7
121.	Demaryius Thomas*, DEN	WR	9
122.	Eddie Royal, DEN	WR	9
123.	Matt Cassel, KC	QB	4
124.	Devin Aromashodu, CHI	WR	8
125.	Jerricho Cotchery, NYJ	WR	7
126.	Vince Young, TEN	QB	9
127.	Visanthe Shiancoe, MIN	TE	4
128.	David Garrard, JAC	QB	9
129.	Antonio Bryant, CIN	WR	6
130.	Nate Burleson, DET	WR	7
131.	Matt Leinart, ARI	QB	6
132.	Anthony Gonzalez, IND	WR	7
133.	Julian Edelman, NE	WR	5
134.	Wes Welker, NE	WR	5
135.	Earl Bennett, CHI	WR	8
136.	Louis Murphy, OAK	WR	10
137.	Early Doucet, ARI	WR	6
138.	Bernard Berrian, MIN	WR	4
139.	Golden Tate*, SEA	WR	5
140.	Lee Evans, BUF	WR	6
141.	Donnie Avery, STL	WR	9
142.	Jason Campbell, OAK	QB	10
143.	Mohamed Massaquoi, CLE	WR	8
144.	Jeremy Shockey, NO	TE	10
145.	Arrelious Benn*, TB	WR	4
146.	John Carlson, SEA	TE	5
147.	Matt Hasselbeck, SEA	QB	5
148.	Kyle Orton, DEN	QB	9
149.	Dustin Keller, NYJ	TE	7
150.	Malcom Floyd, SD	WR	10
151.	Brandon LaFell*, CAR	WR	6
152.	Mike Thomas, JAC	WR	9
153.	Justin Forsett, SEA	RB	5
154.	Kevin Boss, NYG	TE	8
155.	Brian Hartline, MIA	WR	5
156.	Fred Davis, WSH	TE	9
157.	Josh Morgan, SF	WR	9
158.	Josh Freeman, TB	QB	4
159.	Darrius Heyward-Bey, OAK	WR	10
160.	Mardy Gilyard*, STL	WR	9
161.	Carlton Mitchell*, CLE	WR	8
162.	Sam Bradford*, STL	QB	9
163.	Malcolm Kelly, WSH	WR	9
164.	Devin Thomas, WSH	WR	9
165.	Jason Avant, PHI	WR	8
166.	Roy Williams, DAL	WR	4
167.	Jabar Gaffney, DEN	WR	9
168.	Brandon Gibson, STL	WR	9
169.	Chris Chambers, KC	WR	4
170.	Kevin Walter, HOU	WR	7
171.	Devery Henderson, NO	WR	10
172.	Devin Hester, CHI	WR	8
173.	Eric Decker*, DEN	WR	9
174.	Damian Williams*, TEN	WR	9
175.	Chaz Schilens, OAK	WR	10
176.	Mike Williams*, TB	WR	4
177.	Brandon Pettigrew, DET	TE	7
178.	Terrell Owens, FA	WR	--
179.	Torry Holt, NE	WR	5
180.	Jordan Shipley*, CIN	WR	6
181.	Mario Manningham, NYG	WR	8
182.	Matt Moore, CAR	QB	6
183.	Jimmy Clausen*, CAR	QB	6
184.	Mark Clayton, BAL	WR	8
185.	Jermaine Gresham*, CIN	TE	6
186.	Jacoby Jones, HOU	WR	7
187.	Lance Moore, NO	WR	10
188.	Greg Olsen, CHI	TE	8
189.	James Jones, GB	WR	10
190.	Glen Coffee, SF	RB	9
191.	Jake Delhomme, CLE	QB	8
192.	Charlie Whitehurst, SEA	QB	5
193.	Benjamin Watson, CLE	TE	8
194.	Rob Gronkowski*, NE	TE	5
195.	Kevin Faulk, NE	RB	5
196.	Willis McGahee, BAL	RB	8
197.	Jason Snelling, ATL	RB	8
198.	Larry Johnson, WSH	RB	9
199.	Tashard Choice, DAL	RB	4
200.	Bo Scaife, TEN	TE	9

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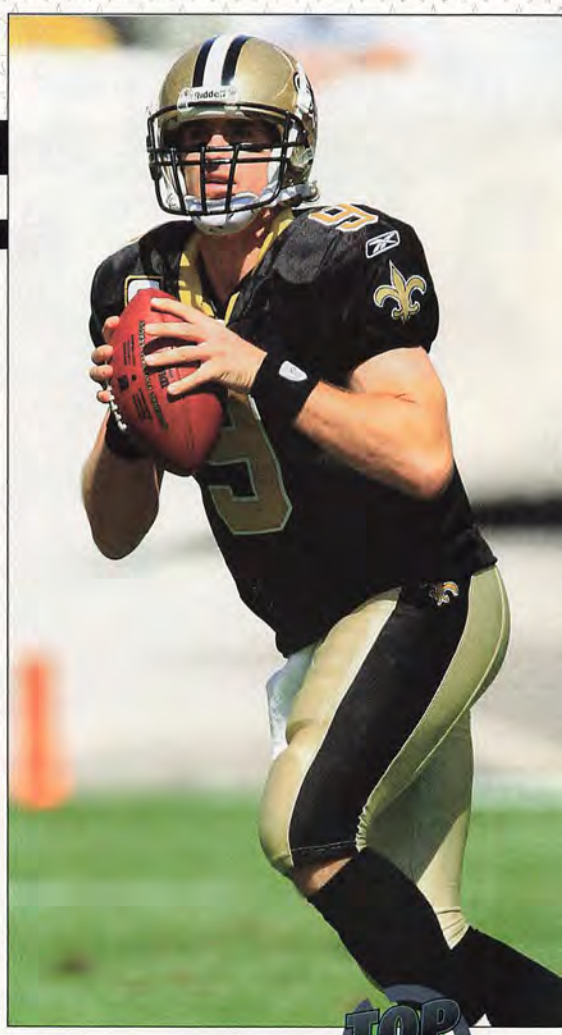
QB QUARTERBACKS

Rk.	Player, Team	BYE
1.	Drew Brees, NO	10
2.	Aaron Rodgers, GB	10
3.	Peyton Manning, IND	7
4.	Philip Rivers, SD	10
5.	Tom Brady	5
6.	Matt Schaub, HOU	7
7.	Tony Romo, DAL	4
8.	Jay Cutler, CHI	8
9.	Brett Favre, MIN	4
10.	Joe Flacco, BAL	8
11.	Donovan McNabb, WSH	9
12.	Carson Palmer, CIN	6
13.	Eli Manning, NYG	8
14.	Matt Ryan, ATL	8
15.	Kevin Kolb, PHI	8
16.	Ben Roethlisberger, PIT	5
17.	Chad Henne, MIA	5
18.	Mark Sanchez, NYJ	7
19.	Matthew Stafford, DET	7
20.	Alex Smith, SF	9
21.	Matt Cassel, KC	4
22.	Vince Young, TEN	9
23.	David Garrard, JAC	9
24.	Matt Leinart, ARI	6
25.	Jason Campbell, OAK	10

1. Drew Brees, NO — Any receiver he throws to automatically becomes a weapon.
2. Aaron Rodgers, GB — He has great weapons and plays in a sling-it-first offense.
3. Peyton Manning, IND — His offensive line aside, Manning has the best offensive supporting cast in fantasy.
4. Philip Rivers, SD — With L.T. gone, the offense belongs completely to this top-tier option.
5. Tom Brady — With Wes Welker hurt and Randy Moss aging, how much longer can he stay this high?
6. Matt Schaub, HOU — He's in for another huge year with Andre Johnson and the return of Owen Daniels.
7. Tony Romo, DAL — The addition of Dez Bryant makes this rock-solid option even more intriguing.
8. Jay Cutler, CHI — New offensive coordinator Mike Martz should put him in position to put up huge digits.
9. Brett Favre, MIN — We think he's coming back for another solid season following a stunning one.
10. Joe Flacco, BAL — Already quite productive, Flacco now has Anquan Boldin as a No. 1 target.
11. Donovan McNabb, WSH — Change of scenery drops him a few spots, but he's still a solid starting option.
12. Carson Palmer, CIN — Despite the addition of Antonio Bryant and Jermaine Gresham, Bengals are a run-first team.
13. Eli Manning, NYG — Will have some big weeks due to the presence of Steve Smith and Hakeem Nicks.
14. Matt Ryan, ATL — Injury limited his production last season, but solid weapons should help him bounce back.
15. Kevin Kolb, PHI — Has the potential to be this year's Aaron Rodgers as he takes over for Donovan McNabb.
16. Ben Roethlisberger, PIT — After a four- to six-week suspension, he'll return as a top-10 option.
17. Chad Henne, MIA — Presence of new toy Brandon Marshall makes Henne intriguing after a solid '09 season.
18. Mark Sanchez, NYJ — Lots of weapons as Santonio Holmes joins Braylon Edwards, Jerricho Cotchery and Dustin Keller.
19. Matthew Stafford, DET — Should blossom with Calvin Johnson, Nate Burleson and Jahvid Best around him.
20. Alex Smith, SF — High upside potential with Michael Crabtree, Vernon Davis and an improved offensive line.
21. Matt Cassel, KC — New offensive coordinator Charlie Weis hopes he can get Cassel back on track.
22. Vince Young, TEN — Combination of physical skills and solid young wideouts at least puts him on the radar.
23. David Garrard, JAC — An ideal fantasy backup faces a make-or-break year in Jacksonville.
24. Matt Leinart, ARI — Has great weapons around him but hasn't fully convinced coaches that he's their guy.
25. Jason Campbell, OAK — Numbers — both his and Oakland's — could improve with his move from Washington.



TOP 5 QB-WR Combos

1. Matt Schaub-Andre Johnson, Texans
2. Peyton Manning-Reggie Wayne, Colts
3. Tom Brady-Randy Moss, Patriots
4. Tony Romo-Miles Austin, Cowboys
5. Brett Favre-Sidney Rice, Vikings

Rk.	Player, Team, Bye
26.	Matt Hasselbeck, SEA, 5
27.	Kyle Orton, DEN, 9
28.	Josh Freeman, TB, 4
29.	Sam Bradford*, STL, 9
30.	Matt Moore, CAR, 6
31.	Jimmy Clausen*, CAR, 6
32.	Jake Delhomme, CLE, 8
33.	Charlie Whitehurst, SEA, 5
34.	Michael Vick, PHI, 8
35.	Trent Edwards, BUF, 6
36.	Dennis Dixon, PIT, 5
37.	Tarvaris Jackson, MIN, 4
38.	Bruce Gradkowski, OAK, 10
39.	Derek Anderson, ARI, 6
40.	Byron Leftwich, PIT, 5

*Rookie

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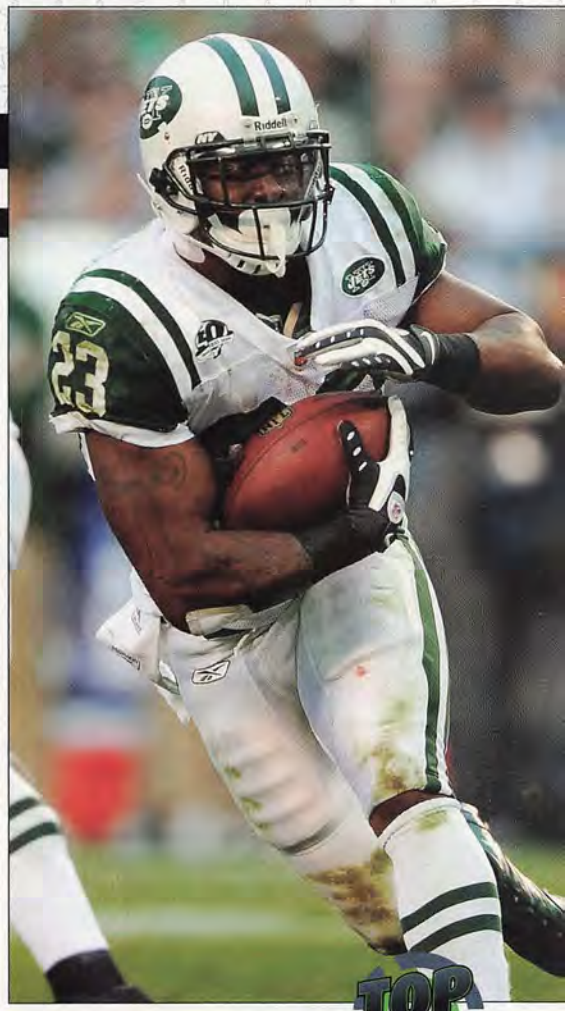
RB RUNNING BACKS

Rk.	Player, Team	BYE
1.	Chris Johnson, TEN	9
2.	Ray Rice, BAL	8
3.	Maurice Jones-Drew, JAC	9
4.	Adrian Peterson, MIN	4
5.	Frank Gore, SF	9
6.	Steven Jackson, STL	9
7.	Michael Turner, ATL	8
8.	LeSean McCoy, PHI	8
9.	Shonn Greene, NYJ	7
10.	Rashard Mendenhall, PIT	5
11.	Ryan Mathews*, SD	10
12.	Matt Forté, CHI	8
13.	Knowshon Moreno, DEN	9
14.	Cedric Benson, CIN	6
15.	DeAngelo Williams, CAR	6
16.	Jonathan Stewart, CAR	6
17.	Pierre Thomas, NO	10
18.	Beanie Wells, ARI	6
19.	Felix Jones, DAL	4
20.	Ryan Grant, GB	10
21.	Jamaal Charles, KC	4
22.	Ben Tate*, HOU	7
23.	Joseph Addai, IND	7
24.	C.J. Spiller*, BUF	6
25.	Tim Hightower, ARI	6

1. **Chris Johnson, TEN** — "Every Coach's Dream" has become every fantasy owner's dream.
2. **Ray Rice, BAL** — The centerpiece of the Ravens' offense, Rice could rival CJ2K's production.
3. **Maurice Jones-Drew, JAC** — One of just a few NFL feature backs with nobody to eat into his workload.
4. **Adrian Peterson, MIN** — Despite fumble-itis, he's one of the game's most explosive and unstoppable playmakers.
5. **Frank Gore, SF** — Should be in for a huge season running behind a beefed-up offensive line; a PPR stud.
6. **Steven Jackson, STL** — Showed fantasy owners last season that he could succeed with no help around him.
7. **Michael Turner, ATL** — Was on pace for a second straight 1,400-yard, double-digit TD season prior to ankle injury.
8. **LeSean McCoy, PHI** — Phenomenal upside as Eagles' new feature back, especially in PPR leagues.
9. **Shonn Greene, NYJ** — Showed what he's capable of during the AFC playoffs.
10. **Rashard Mendenhall, PIT** — Multipurpose playmaker should be the centerpiece of the Steelers' offense in 2010.
11. **Ryan Mathews*, SD** — LaDainian Tomlinson's replacement might have a better rookie season than L.T. did.
12. **Matt Forté, CHI** — Presence of Chester Taylor is a little scary; should rack up catches in Mike Martz's offense.
13. **Knowshon Moreno, DEN** — Josh McDaniels obviously loves this guy and will give him every opportunity to succeed.
14. **Cedric Benson, CIN** — As long as he's healthy, he should get the rock 25-plus times per week.
15. **DeAngelo Williams, CAR** — Carolina pounds it enough for him to produce his third straight 1,000-yard season.
16. **Jonathan Stewart, CAR** — Will share load with DeAngelo Williams, but still capable of huge games each week.
17. **Pierre Thomas, NO** — New Orleans' top rushing option should see more TD opportunities with Mike Bell gone.
18. **Beanie Wells, ARI** — Huge potential. Would be ranked higher in a non-PPR format; money in TD-only leagues.
19. **Felix Jones, DAL** — Incredible outside speed makes him a threat to score on every play.
20. **Ryan Grant, GB** — Not flashy, but plays in a great offense and was Mr. Consistency in 2009.
21. **Jamaal Charles, KC** — Freakish finish to '09 season was diminished by the acquisition of Thomas Jones.
22. **Ben Tate*, HOU** — Great speed/size combo has 2010 Fantasy Rookie of the Year written all over him.
23. **Joseph Addai, IND** — Surprised many with his comeback season in '09; should continue to be a solid RB2.
24. **C.J. Spiller*, BUF** — Has great speed and should see many opportunities despite a crowded Buffalo backfield.
25. **Tim Hightower, ARI** — A reception hog and a solid goal line option despite the presence of Beanie Wells.



Christopher Hanewinckel/US Presswire

TOP 5 Goal Line Backs

1. Marion Barber, Cowboys
2. Willis McGahee, Ravens
3. Michael Bush, Raiders
4. Tim Hightower, Cardinals
5. LenDale White, Seahawks

Rk.	Player, Team, Bye	Rk.	Player, Team, Bye
26.	Darren McFadden, OAK, 10	43.	Cadillac Williams, TB, 4
27.	Ricky Williams, MIA, 5	44.	Marshawn Lynch, BUF, 6
28.	Fred Jackson, BUF, 6	45.	Toby Gerhart*, MIN, 4
29.	Marion Barber, DAL, 4	46.	LenDale White, SEA, 5
30.	Ahmad Bradshaw, NYG, 8	47.	Clinton Portis, WSH, 9
31.	Ronnie Brown, MIA, 5	48.	Darren Sproles, SD, 10
32.	Jahvid Best*, DET, 7	49.	LaDainian Tomlinson, NYJ, 7
33.	Thomas Jones, KC, 4	50.	Justin Forsett, SEA, 5
34.	Brandon Jacobs, NYG, 8	51.	Glen Coffee, SF, 9
35.	Donald Brown, IND, 7	52.	Kevin Faulk, NE, 5
36.	Montario Hardesty*, CLE, 8	53.	Willis McGahee, BAL, 8
37.	Reggie Bush, NO, 10	54.	Jason Snelling, ATL, 8
38.	Jerome Harrison, CLE, 8	55.	Larry Johnson, WSH, 9
39.	Steve Slaton, HOU, 7	56.	Tashard Choice, DAL, 4
40.	Laurence Maroney, NE, 5	57.	Jerious Norwood, ATL, 8
41.	Kevin Smith, DET, 7	58.	Leon Washington, SEA, 5
42.	Chester Taylor, CHI, 8	59.	Michael Bush, OAK, 10
		60.	Correll Buckhalter, DEN, 9

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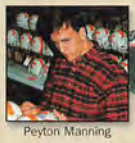
Peyton Manning

Joe Montana

Terry Bradshaw

Brett Favre

Chris "C2K" Johnson

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WR WIDE RECEIVERS

Rk.	Player, Team	BYE
1.	Andre Johnson, HOU	7
2.	Brandon Marshall, MIA	5
3.	Larry Fitzgerald, ARI	6
4.	Calvin Johnson, DET	7
5.	Roddy White, ATL	8
6.	Sidney Rice, MIN	4
7.	Miles Austin, DAL	4
8.	Anquan Boldin, BAL	8
9.	Randy Moss, NE	5
10.	Reggie Wayne, IND	7
11.	Michael Crabtree, SF	9
12.	Greg Jennings, GB	10
13.	Chad Ochocinco, CIN	6
14.	Steve Smith, NYG	8
15.	Marques Colston, NO	10
16.	DeSean Jackson, PHI	8
17.	Vincent Jackson, SD	10
18.	Jeremy Maclin, PHI	8
19.	Hakeem Nicks, NYG	8
20.	Donald Driver, GB	10
21.	Dwayne Bowe, KC	4
22.	Steve Smith, CAR	6
23.	Dez Bryant*, DAL	4
24.	Kenny Britt, TEN	9
25.	Hines Ward, PIT	5

1. **Andre Johnson, HOU** — An unstoppable force in one of the league's best passing offenses.
2. **Brandon Marshall, MIA** — More than 100 catches in each of the last three seasons, and now he's supposedly at peace.
3. **Larry Fitzgerald, ARI** — One of the game's best receivers must overcome the retirement of Kurt Warner.
4. **Calvin Johnson, DET** — Has the potential to be the top fantasy wideout if he and Matthew Stafford stay healthy.
5. **Roddy White, ATL** — Matt Ryan's favorite target is a solid mix of physicality and speed.
6. **Sidney Rice, MIN** — Randy Moss Jr. would see a bit of a value dip should Brett Favre actually retire.
7. **Miles Austin, DAL** — Fantasy's newest stud WR has scary-good chemistry with Tony Romo.
8. **Anquan Boldin, BAL** — With Joe Flacco at the helm he'll be better in Baltimore than he was in Arizona.
9. **Randy Moss, NE** — Age hasn't stopped this guy from being a solid fantasy option in all formats.
10. **Reggie Wayne, IND** — Shares the spotlight with others, but still the No. 1 receiver in one of the NFL's top offenses.
11. **Michael Crabtree, SF** — Played very well in an incomplete rookie season; poised to become 49ers' No. 1 receiving option.
12. **Greg Jennings, GB** — A Marvin Harrison-esque technician with great ability in a top passing offense.
13. **Chad Ochocinco, CIN** — Will *Dancing With the Stars* slow him down? Despite age, still a solid WR1.
14. **Steve Smith, NYG** — Giants' young reception hog will continue to be Eli Manning's favorite target.
15. **Marques Colston, NO** — Big target in one of the NFL's premier passing attacks.
16. **DeSean Jackson, PHI** — Explosive playmaker notched 11 plays from scrimmage of 40 or more yards in 2009.
17. **Vincent Jackson, SD** — Philip Rivers' 6'5" target hauled in four or more balls on 12 occasions last year.
18. **Jeremy Maclin, PHI** — Blossomed as a rookie and should benefit from double coverage on DeSean Jackson.
19. **Hakeem Nicks, NYG** — Scored TDs in four straight games as a rookie; should make Mario Manningham obsolete.
20. **Donald Driver, GB** — Veteran still plays like he's 28 and is in one of the best passing offenses in the NFL.
21. **Dwayne Bowe, KC** — Suspended for four games last season and greatly underperformed; should bounce back.
22. **Steve Smith, CAR** — Failed to record 1,000 yards in a season last year for the first time since 2004.
23. **Dez Bryant*, DAL** — Rookie phenom has a chance to step in and start opposite Miles Austin.
24. **Kenny Britt, TEN** — Second-year man moves into the No. 1 role and has great chemistry with Vince Young.
25. **Hines Ward, PIT** — Veteran should have at least one more solid statistical season in him.

Tim Clark/Athlon Sports

Third-Year WR Breakouts

TOP 5

1. Early Doucet, Cardinals
2. Devin Thomas, Redskins
3. Chaz Schilens, Raiders
4. Malcolm Kelly, Redskins
5. Jordy Nelson, Packers

Rk. Player, Team, Bye	Rk. Player, Team, Bye
26. Mike Sims-Walker, JAC, 9	51. Early Doucet, ARI, 6
27. Percy Harvin, MIN, 4	52. Bernard Berrian, MIN, 4
28. Santana Moss, WSH, 9	53. Golden Tate*, SEA, 5
29. Austin Collie, IND, 7	54. Lee Evans, BUF, 6
30. Mike Wallace, PIT, 5	55. Donnie Avery, STL, 9
31. Braylon Edwards, NYJ, 7	56. Mohamed Massaquoi, CLE, 8
32. T.J. Houshmandzadeh, SEA, 5	57. Arrelious Benn*, TB, 4
33. Pierre Garcon, IND, 7	58. Malcom Floyd, SD, 10
34. Santonio Holmes, NYJ, 7	59. Brandon LaFell*, CAR, 6
35. Robert Meachem, NO, 10	60. Mike Thomas, JAC, 9
36. Derrick Mason, BAL, 8	61. Brian Hartline, MIA, 5
37. Johnny Knox, CHI, 8	62. Josh Morgan, SF, 9
38. Steve Breaston, ARI, 6	63. Darrius Heyward-Bey, OAK, 10
39. Dexter McCluster*, KC, 4	64. Mardy Gilyard*, STL, 9
40. Demaryius Thomas*, DEN, 9	65. Carlton Mitchell*, CLE, 8
41. Eddie Royal, DEN, 9	66. Malcolm Kelly, WSH, 9
42. Devin Aromashodu, CHI, 8	67. Devin Thomas, WSH, 9
43. Jerricho Cotchery, NYJ, 7	68. Jason Avant, PHI, 8
44. Antonio Bryant, CIN, 6	69. Roy Williams, DAL, 4
45. Nate Burleson, DET, 7	70. Jabar Gaffney, DEN, 9
46. Anthony Gonzalez, IND, 7	71. Brandon Gibson, STL, 9
47. Julian Edelman, NE, 5	72. Chris Chambers, KC, 4
48. Wes Welker, NE, 5	73. Kevin Walter, HOU, 7
49. Earl Bennett, CHI, 8	74. Devery Henderson, NO, 10
50. Louis Murphy, OAK, 10	75. Devin Hester, CHI, 8

*Rookie

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Here's the scoop

TE TIGHT ENDS

Rk.	Player, Team	BYE
1.	Dallas Clark, IND	7
2.	Antonio Gates, SD	10
3.	Vernon Davis, SF	9
4.	Jason Witten, DAL	4
5.	Jermichael Finley, GB	10
6.	Brent Celek, PHI	8
7.	Tony Gonzalez, ATL	8
8.	Kellen Winslow, TB	4
9.	Chris Cooley, WSH	9
10.	Owen Daniels, HOU	7
11.	Zach Miller, OAK	10
12.	Heath Miller, PIT	5
13.	Visanthe Shiancoe, MIN	4
14.	Jeremy Shockey, NO	10
15.	John Carlson, SEA	5
16.	Dustin Keller, NYJ	7
17.	Kevin Boss, NYG	8
18.	Fred Davis, WSH	9
19.	Brandon Pettigrew, DET	7
20.	Jermaine Gresham*, CIN	6
21.	Greg Olsen, CHI	8
22.	Benjamin Watson, CLE	8
23.	Rob Gronkowski*, NE	5
24	Bo Scaife, TEN	9
25.	Shawn Nelson, BUF	6

1. **Dallas Clark, IND** — Has solidified himself as the No. 2 option in Indy's premier passing attack.
2. **Antonio Gates, SD** — The model of consistency at the toughest position to find it.
3. **Vernon Davis, SF** — Finally lived up to the 2006 NFL Draft hype last season; should continue to be scary good.
4. **Jason Witten, DAL** — Should still be a reception hog even with Dez Bryant on board.
5. **Jermichael Finley, GB** — Ready to take the next step after several breakout performances in 2009.
6. **Brent Celek, PHI** — Had two of his biggest games of 2009 with Kevin Kolb at the helm.
7. **Tony Gonzalez, ATL** — Capable of huge games and still one of the top TE threats, even at 34.
8. **Kellen Winslow, TB** — The only reliable pass-catching target in Tampa's offense.
9. **Chris Cooley, WSH** — Will benefit greatly from the presence of Donovan McNabb; should be a PPR stud.
10. **Owen Daniels, HOU** — Returns from his third career ACL tear, but should be ready by Week 1.
11. **Zach Miller, OAK** — Should be a legit fantasy TE1 with Jason Campbell in Oakland.
12. **Heath Miller, PIT** — Will pick up where he left off after entering Premiersville in 2009.
13. **Visanthe Shiancoe, MIN** — Brett Favre's status won't make or break this solid red zone target.
14. **Jeremy Shockey, NO** — Has never played a full 16-game season during his eight-year career.
15. **John Carlson, SEA** — Has the talent to be a top-tier fantasy TE, but will Pete Carroll feature him?
16. **Dustin Keller, NYJ** — A speedy seam-buster like Dallas Clark who must become more reliable.
17. **Kevin Boss, NYG** — Has the size, hands and situation to blossom into an every-week starter.
18. **Fred Davis, WSH** — If Chris Cooley misses time, he becomes a must-start TE1.
19. **Brandon Pettigrew, DET** — If he can return from a torn ACL, he's a solid TE2 with upside.
20. **Jermaine Gresham*, CIN** — Talented rookie gives Bengals the TE receiving threat they've sorely lacked.
21. **Greg Olsen, CHI** — Is all the hype about Mike Martz hating pass-catching TEs true? We're banking on it.
22. **Benjamin Watson, CLE** — Lack of receiving options in Cleveland makes him somewhat attractive.
23. **Rob Gronkowski*, NE** — Pats have a glaring need and he seems to fit the Antonio Gates mold.
24. **Bo Scaife, TEN** — Supposed rapport with college teammate Vince Young has never developed.
25. **Shawn Nelson, BUF** — Bills need someone other than Lee Evans to produce in the passing game.

Brett Davis/US Presswire

TEs on the Rise

TOP 5

1. Jermichael Finley, Packers
2. Brent Celek, Eagles
3. John Carlson, Seahawks
4. Fred Davis, Redskins
5. Brandon Pettigrew, Lions

Rk.	*Player, Team, Bye*
26.	Tony Scheffler, DET, 7
27.	Aaron Hernandez*, NE, 5
28.	Marcedes Lewis, JAC, 9
29.	Jared Cook, TEN, 9
30.	Todd Heap, BAL, 8
31.	Anthony Fasano, MIA, 5
32.	Zach Miller, JAC, 9
33.	Ed Dixon*, BAL, 8
34.	Dante Rosario, CAR, 6
35.	Alge Crumpler, NE, 5
36.	James Casey, HOU, 7
37.	Donald Lee, GB, 10
38.	Evan Moore, CLE, 8
39.	Martellus Bennett, DAL, 4
40.	Travis Beckum, NYG, 8

*Rookie

K KICKERS

Rk.	Player, Team	BYE
1.	Nate Kaeding, SD	10
2.	Ryan Longwell, MIN	4
3.	Mason Crosby, GB	10
4.	David Akers, PHI	8
5.	Stephen Gostkowski, NE	5
6.	Rob Bironas, TEN	9
7.	Phil Dawson, CLE	8
8.	Jeff Reed, PIT	5
9.	Robbie Gould, CHI	8
10.	Lawrence Tynes, NYG	8
11.	Billy Cundiff, BAL	8
12.	Garrett Hartley, NO	10
13.	Matt Prater, DEN	9
14.	Neil Rackers, HOU	7
15.	Jay Feely, ARI	6
16.	Adam Vinatieri, IND	7
17.	Nick Folk, NYJ	7
18.	Josh Brown, STL	9
19.	Jason Hanson, DET	7
20.	John Kasay, CAR	6
21.	David Buehler, DAL	4
22.	Graham Gano, WSH	9
23.	Sebastian Janikowski, OAK	10
24.	Mike Nugent, CIN	6
25.	Dave Rayner, CIN	6
26.	Josh Scobee, JAC	9
27.	Matt Bryant, ATL	8
28.	Olindo Mare, SEA	5
29.	Rian Lindell, BUF	6
30.	Joe Nedney, SF	9
31.	Ryan Succop, KC	4
32.	Dan Carpenter, MIA	5
33	Connor Barth, TB	7
34.	Steven Hauschka, ATL	8
35.	Kris Brown, HOU	7

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DEF DEFENSE/SPECIAL TEAMS

Rk.	Team	BYE	Rk.	Team	BYE
1.	New York Jets	7	17.	New York Giants	8
2.	Green Bay Packers	10	18.	Oakland Raiders	10
3.	Baltimore Ravens	8	19.	Indianapolis Colts	7
4.	Cincinnati Bengals	6	20.	Arizona Cardinals	6
5.	Minnesota Vikings	4	21.	Miami Dolphins	5
6.	Pittsburgh Steelers	5	22.	Atlanta Falcons	8
7.	Dallas Cowboys	4	23.	Buffalo Bills	6
8.	Washington Redskins	9	24.	Tennessee Titans	9
9.	New England Patriots	5	25.	Tampa Bay Buccaneers	4
10.	Philadelphia Eagles	8	26.	Jacksonville Jaguars	9
11.	Chicago Bears	8	27.	Seattle Seahawks	5
12.	Denver Broncos	9	28.	Cleveland Browns	8
13.	Carolina Panthers	6	29.	New Orleans Saints	10
14.	Houston Texans	7	30.	St. Louis Rams	9
15.	San Francisco 49ers	9	31.	Kansas City Chiefs	4
16.	San Diego Chargers	10	32.	Detroit Lions	7

2010 NFL STATISTICS

NFL OFFENSE

	PPG	TD	FG	Total YPG	Rush YPG	Pass YPG	Sack	3rd %	Take
New Orleans	31.9	64	22	403.8	131.6	272.2	20	44.7	28
Dallas	22.6	43	20	399.4	131.4	267.9	34	40.6	19
New England	26.7	50	26	397.3	120.1	277.2	18	43.7	22
Houston	24.2	46	21	383.1	92.2	290.9	25	40.2	28
Minnesota	29.4	56	26	379.6	119.9	259.8	34	44.8	18
Green Bay	28.8	54	27	379.1	117.8	261.2	51	47.0	16
Pittsburgh	23.0	41	27	371.3	112.1	259.2	50	39.4	25
N.Y. Giants	25.1	46	27	366.0	114.8	251.2	32	42.9	31
Indianapolis	26.0	53	16	363.1	80.9	282.2	13	49.2	24
San Diego	28.4	51	32	360.1	88.9	271.1	26	44.4	17
Philadelphia	26.8	47	32	357.9	102.3	255.6	38	36.2	23
Tennessee	22.1	39	27	351.4	162.0	189.4	15	41.6	31
Baltimore	24.4	47	21	351.2	137.5	213.7	36	41.6	22
Arizona	23.4	46	18	344.4	93.4	251.0	26	36.3	36
Denver	20.4	34	30	341.4	114.8	226.7	34	36.3	23
Atlanta	22.7	44	19	340.4	117.2	223.2	27	42.1	25
Miami	22.5	41	25	337.6	139.4	198.1	34	49.0	29
Jacksonville	18.1	34	18	336.6	126.8	209.8	44	45.1	23
Carolina	19.7	35	22	331.1	156.1	174.9	33	37.3	31
N.Y. Jets	21.8	37	30	321.0	172.2	148.8	30	37.1	30
Seattle	17.5	30	24	316.8	97.9	218.9	41	33.3	31
Washington	16.6	29	22	312.5	94.4	218.1	46	39.8	28
Chicago	20.4	36	24	310.3	93.2	217.1	35	37.3	34
Cincinnati	19.1	34	23	309.1	128.5	180.6	29	40.6	25
Kansas City	18.4	31	25	303.2	120.6	182.6	45	27.3	27
Detroit	16.4	28	21	299.0	101.0	198.0	43	35.9	41
San Francisco	20.6	39	19	290.8	100.0	190.8	40	29.8	24
Tampa Bay	15.2	28	16	287.5	101.7	185.8	33	32.6	34
St. Louis	10.9	17	19	279.4	111.5	167.9	44	32.3	33
Buffalo	16.1	25	28	273.9	116.7	157.2	46	25.8	30
Oakland	12.3	17	26	266.1	106.3	159.8	49	29.6	33
Cleveland	15.3	25	23	260.2	130.4	129.8	30	32.6	31

NFL DEFENSE

	PPG	TD	FG	Total YPG	Rush YPG	Pass YPG	Sack	3rd %	Take
N.Y. Jets	14.8	26	19	252.3	98.6	153.7	32	31.5	31
Green Bay	18.6	36	13	284.4	83.3	201.1	37	36.0	40
Baltimore	16.3	27	24	300.5	93.2	207.2	32	36.7	32
Cincinnati	18.2	32	23	301.4	98.3	203.1	34	38.6	25
Pittsburgh	20.2	37	22	305.3	89.9	215.4	47	42.3	22
Minnesota	19.5	36	22	305.5	87.1	218.4	48	34.5	24
Denver	20.2	34	29	315.0	128.7	186.3	39	37.2	30
Carolina	19.2	36	19	315.8	124.8	191.0	31	35.5	37
Dallas	15.6	28	18	315.9	90.5	225.4	42	35.0	21
Washington	21.0	34	31	319.7	112.4	207.2	40	39.7	17
New England	17.8	35	14	320.2	110.5	209.7	31	37.1	28
Philadelphia	21.1	39	21	321.1	104.7	216.4	44	33.0	38
Houston	20.8	39	20	324.9	106.9	217.9	30	39.3	27
N.Y. Giants	26.7	54	18	324.9	110.8	214.1	32	38.7	24
San Francisco	17.6	28	29	326.4	97.0	229.4	44	36.7	33
San Diego	20.0	35	25	327.0	117.8	209.2	35	40.4	24
Chicago	23.4	43	25	337.8	126.4	211.4	35	41.2	28
Indianapolis	19.2	31	30	339.2	126.5	212.7	34	45.0	25
Buffalo	20.4	37	22	340.6	156.3	184.2	32	40.4	33
Arizona	20.3	38	19	346.4	112.8	233.7	43	35.3	29
Atlanta	20.3	38	20	348.9	106.9	241.9	28	45.3	28
Miami	24.4	42	33	349.3	114.7	234.6	44	34.8	21
Jacksonville	23.8	44	24	352.3	116.4	235.9	14	45.0	25
Seattle	24.4	46	22	356.4	111.0	245.4	28	39.0	23
New Orleans	21.3	37	27	357.8	122.2	235.6	35	38.0	39
Oakland	23.7	41	30	361.9	155.5	206.4	37	35.6	20
Tampa Bay	25.0	46	26	365.6	158.2	207.4	28	40.2	29
Tennessee	25.1	48	22	365.6	106.9	258.7	32	40.8	27
St. Louis	27.2	54	19	372.8	137.6	235.2	25	43.5	19
Kansas City	26.5	48	29	388.2	156.5	231.7	22	38.1	28
Cleveland	23.4	41	30	389.3	144.6	244.7	40	38.9	19
Detroit	30.9	57	31	392.1	126.6	265.6	26	40.5	22

2009 NFL STANDINGS

AFC

EAST	W-L	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Road	Div
NEW ENGLAND	10-6	.625	427	285	8-0	2-6	4-2
N.Y. JETS	9-7	.563	348	236	4-4	5-3	2-4
MIAMI	7-9	.438	360	390	4-4	3-5	4-2
BUFFALO	6-10	.375	258	326	3-5	3-5	2-4
NORTH	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
CINCINNATI	10-6	.625	305	291	6-2	4-4	6-0
BALTIMORE	9-7	.563	391	261	6-2	3-5	3-3
PITTSBURGH	9-7	.563	368	324	6-2	3-5	2-4
CLEVELAND	5-11	.313	245	375	3-5	2-6	1-5
SOUTH	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
INDIANAPOLIS	14-2	.875	416	307	7-1	7-1	6-0
HOUSTON	9-7	.563	388	333	4-4	5-3	1-5
TENNESSEE	8-8	.500	354	402	5-3	3-5	2-4
JACKSONVILLE	7-9	.438	290	380	5-3	2-6	3-3
WEST	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
SAN DIEGO	13-3	.813	454	320	6-2	7-1	5-1
DENVER	8-8	.500	326	324	4-4	4-4	3-3
OAKLAND	5-11	.313	197	379	2-6	3-5	2-4
KANSAS CITY	4-12	.250	294	424	1-7	3-5	2-4

NFC

EAST	W-L	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Road	Div
DALLAS	11-5	.688	361	250	6-2	5-3	4-2
PHILADELPHIA	11-5	.688	429	337	6-2	5-3	4-2
N.Y. GIANTS	8-8	.500	402	427	4-4	4-4	4-2
WASHINGTON	4-12	.250	266	336	3-5	1-7	0-6
NORTH	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
MINNESOTA	12-4	.750	470	312	8-0	4-4	5-1
GREEN BAY	11-5	.688	461	297	6-2	5-3	4-2
CHICAGO	7-9	.438	327	375	5-3	2-6	3-3
DETROIT	2-14	.125	262	494	2-6	0-8	0-6
SOUTH	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
NEW ORLEANS	13-3	.813	510	341	6-2	7-1	4-2
ATLANTA	9-7	.563	363	325	6-2	3-5	3-3
CAROLINA	8-8	.500	315	308	5-3	3-5	4-2
TAMPA BAY	3-13	.188	244	400	1-7	2-6	1-5
WEST	**W-L**	**Pct**	**PF**	**PA**	**Home**	**Road**	**Div**
ARIZONA	10-6	.625	375	325	4-4	6-2	4-2
SAN FRANCISCO	8-8	.500	330	281	6-2	2-6	5-1
SEATTLE	5-11	.313	280	390	4-4	1-7	3-3
ST. LOUIS	1-15	.063	175	436	0-8	1-7	0-6

2009 POSTSEASON

AFC Wild Card Playoff Games
New York Jets 24, CINCINNATI 14
Baltimore 33, NEW ENGLAND 14

NFC Wild Card Playoff Games
DALLAS 34, Philadelphia 14
ARIZONA 51, Green Bay 45 (ot)

AFC Divisional Playoff Games
INDIANAPOLIS 20, Baltimore 3
New York Jets 17, SAN DIEGO 14

NFC Divisional Playoff Games
NEW ORLEANS 45, Arizona 14
MINNESOTA 34, Dallas 3

AFC Championship Game
INDIANAPOLIS 30, New York Jets 17

NFC Championship Game
NEW ORLEANS 31, Minnesota 28 (ot)

Super Bowl XLIV
New Orleans 31, Indianapolis 17

Home teams in CAPS

NFL PASSING LEADERS

	YDS	ATT	CMP	TD	INT	LONG	RATING
Drew Brees, NO	4388	514	363	34	11	75	109.6
Brett Favre, MIN	4202	531	363	33	7	63	107.2
Philip Rivers, SD	4254	486	317	28	9	81	104.4
Aaron Rodgers, GB	4434	541	350	30	7	83	103.2
Ben Roethlisberger, PIT	4328	506	337	26	12	60	100.5
Peyton Manning, IND	4500	571	393	33	16	80	99.9
Matt Schaub, HOU	4770	583	396	29	15	72	98.6
Tony Romo, DAL	4483	550	347	26	9	80	97.6
Tom Brady, NE	4398	565	371	28	13	81	96.2
Kurt Warner, ARI	3753	513	339	26	14	45	93.2
Eli Manning, NYG	4021	509	317	27	14	74	93.1
Donovan McNabb, PHI	3553	443	267	22	10	60	92.9
Joe Flacco, BAL	3613	499	315	21	12	72	88.9
Kyle Orton, DEN	3802	541	336	21	12	87	86.8
Jason Campbell, WAS	3618	507	327	20	15	84	86.4
Carson Palmer, CIN	3094	466	282	21	13	73	83.6
David Garrard, JAC	3597	516	314	15	10	63	83.5
Vince Young, TEN	1879	259	152	10	7	66	82.8
Alex Smith, SF	2350	372	225	18	12	73	81.5
Matt Ryan, ATL	2916	451	263	22	14	90	80.9
Jay Cutler, CHI	3666	555	336	27	26	71	76.8
Chad Henne, MIA	2878	451	274	12	14	67	75.2
Matt Hasselbeck, SEA	3029	488	293	17	17	53	75.1
Trent Edwards, BUF	1169	183	110	6	7	46	73.8
Marc Bulger, STL	1469	247	140	5	6	50	70.7
Matt Cassel, KC	2924	493	271	16	16	61	69.9
Ryan Fitzpatrick, BUF	1422	227	127	9	10	98	69.7
Brady Quinn, CLE	1339	256	136	8	7	59	67.2
Kerry Collins, TEN	1225	216	119	6	8	69	65.5
Mark Sanchez, NYJ	2444	364	196	12	20	65	63.0
Matthew Stafford, DET	2267	377	201	13	20	75	61.0
Josh Freeman, TB	1855	290	158	10	18	42	59.8
Jake Delhomme, CAR	2015	321	178	8	18	52	59.4
JaMarcus Russell, OAK	1287	246	120	3	11	86	50.0

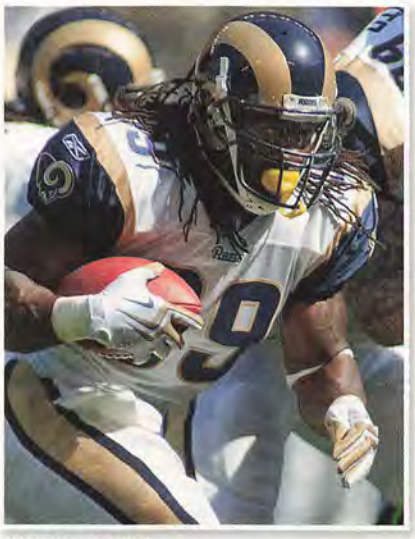
DREW BREES

WES WELKER

NFL RUSHING LEADERS

	YDS	ATT	AVG	TD	LONG
Chris Johnson, TEN	2006	358	5.6	14	91
Steven Jackson, STL	1416	324	4.4	4	58
Thomas Jones, NYJ	1402	331	4.2	14	71
Maurice Jones-Drew, JAC	1391	312	4.5	15	80
Adrian Peterson, MIN	1383	314	4.4	18	64
Ray Rice, BAL	1339	254	5.3	7	59
Ryan Grant, GB	1253	282	4.4	11	62
Cedric Benson, CIN	1251	301	4.2	6	42
Jonathan Stewart, CAR	1133	221	5.1	10	67
Ricky Williams, MIA	1121	241	4.7	11	68
Jamaal Charles, KC	1120	190	5.9	7	76
Frank Gore, SF	1120	229	4.9	10	80
DeAngelo Williams, CAR	1117	216	5.2	7	77
Rashard Mendenhall, PIT	1108	242	4.6	7	60
Fred Jackson, BUF	1062	237	4.5	2	43
Knowshon Moreno, DEN	947	247	3.8	7	36
Marion Barber, DAL	932	214	4.4	7	35
Matt Forté, CHI	929	258	3.6	4	61
Michael Turner, ATL	871	178	4.9	10	58
Jerome Harrison, CLE	862	194	4.4	5	71
Brandon Jacobs, NYG	835	224	3.7	5	31
Joseph Addai, IND	828	219	3.8	10	21
Cadillac Williams, TB	823	211	3.9	4	35
Pierre Thomas, NO	793	147	5.4	6	34
Beanie Wells, ARI	793	176	4.5	7	33
Ahmad Bradshaw, NYG	778	163	4.8	7	38
Laurence Maroney, NE	757	194	3.9	9	45
Kevin Smith, DET	747	217	3.4	4	31
LaDainian Tomlinson, SD	730	223	3.3	12	36
Felix Jones, DAL	685	116	5.9	3	56
Julius Jones, SEA	663	177	3.7	2	62
Mike Bell, NO	654	172	3.8	5	35
Ronnie Brown, MIA	648	147	4.4	8	45
Correll Buckhalter, DEN	642	120	5.4	1	45
LeSean McCoy, PHI	637	155	4.1	4	66
Justin Forsett, SEA	619	114	5.4	4	35
Jason Snelling, ATL	613	142	4.3	4	31
Tim Hightower, ARI	598	143	4.2	8	50
Michael Bush, OAK	589	123	4.8	3	60
Larry Johnson, KC/CIN	581	178	3.3	0	27
Willis McGahee, BAL	544	109	5.0	12	77
Shonn Greene, NYJ	540	108	5.0	2	33
Jamal Lewis, CLE	500	143	3.5	0	18
Clinton Portis, WAS	494	124	4.0	1	78
Justin Fargas, OAK	491	129	3.8	3	35
Marshawn Lynch, BUF	450	120	3.8	2	47
Steve Slaton, HOU	437	131	3.3	3	32
Derrick Ward, TB	409	114	3.6	1	28
Ryan Moats, HOU	390	101	3.9	4	17
Reggie Bush, NO	390	70	5.6	5	55
Willie Parker, PIT	389	98	4.0	0	34
Maurice Morris, DET	384	93	4.1	2	64
Josh Cribbs, CLE	381	55	6.9	1	37
Darren McFadden, OAK	357	104	3.4	1	28
Tashard Choice, DAL	349	64	5.5	3	66
Darren Sproles, SD	343	93	3.7	3	21
Chester Taylor, MIN	338	94	3.6	1	25

CHRIS JOHNSON



STEVEN JACKSON

NFL RECEIVING LEADERS

	REC	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Wes Welker, NE	123	1348	11.0	4	58
Steve Smith, NYG	107	1220	11.4	7	51
Andre Johnson, HOU	101	1569	15.5	9	72
Brandon Marshall, DEN	101	1120	11.1	10	75
Reggie Wayne, IND	100	1264	12.6	10	65
Dallas Clark, IND	100	1106	11.1	10	80
Larry Fitzgerald, ARI	97	1092	11.3	13	34
Hines Ward, PIT	95	1167	12.3	6	54
Jason Witten, DAL	94	1030	11.0	2	69
Roddy White, ATL	85	1153	13.6	11	90
Anquan Boldin, ARI	84	1024	12.2	4	44
Randy Moss, NE	83	1264	15.2	13	71
Sidney Rice, MIN	83	1312	15.8	8	63
Tony Gonzalez, ATL	83	867	10.4	6	27
Miles Austin, DAL	81	1320	16.3	11	60
Santonio Holmes, PIT	79	1248	15.8	5	57
Antonio Gates, SD	79	1157	14.6	8	56
T.J. Houshmandzadeh, SEA	79	911	11.5	3	53
Ray Rice, BAL	78	702	9.0	1	63
Vernon Davis, SF	78	965	12.4	13	73
Kellen Winslow, TB	77	884	11.5	5	42
Heath Miller, PIT	76	789	10.4	6	41
Davone Bess, MIA	76	758	10.0	2	34
Brent Celek, PHI	76	971	12.8	8	47
Derrick Mason, BAL	73	1028	14.1	7	72
Chad Ochocinco, CIN	72	1047	14.5	9	50
Marques Colston, NO	70	1074	15.3	9	68
Donald Driver, GB	70	1061	15.2	6	71
Santana Moss, WAS	70	902	12.9	3	59
Vincent Jackson, SD	68	1167	17.2	9	55
Greg Jennings, GB	68	1113	16.4	4	83
Calvin Johnson, DET	67	984	14.7	5	75
Zach Miller, OAK	66	805	12.2	3	86
Steve Smith, CAR	65	982	15.1	7	66
Mike Sims-Walker, JAC	63	869	13.8	7	61
Nate Burleson, SEA	63	812	12.9	3	44
Tim Hightower, ARI	63	428	6.8	0	23
DeSean Jackson, PHI	62	1156	18.6	9	71
Austin Collie, IND	60	676	11.3	7	39
Percy Harvin, MIN	60	790	13.2	6	51
Greg Olsen, CHI	60	612	10.2	8	41
Jerricho Cotchery, NYJ	57	821	14.4	3	53
Mario Manningham, NYG	57	822	14.4	5	49
Devin Hester, CHI	57	757	13.3	3	48
Matt Forté, CHI	57	471	8.3	0	37
Jeremy Maclin, PHI	56	773	13.8	4	56
Visanthe Shiancoe, MIN	56	566	10.1	11	27
Terrell Owens, BUF	55	829	15.1	5	98
Steve Breaston, ARI	55	712	12.9	3	45
Jermichael Finley, GB	55	676	12.3	5	62
Bernard Berrian, MIN	55	618	11.2	4	40
Jabar Gaffney, DEN	54	732	13.6	2	49
Earl Bennett, CHI	54	717	13.3	2	71
Kevin Walter, HOU	53	611	11.5	2	41
Todd Heap, BAL	53	593	11.2	6	31
Maurice Jones-Drew, JAC	53	374	7.1	1	19
Muhsin Muhammad, CAR	53	581	11.0	1	27
Josh Morgan, SF	52	527	10.1	3	61
Frank Gore, SF	52	406	7.8	3	48
Torry Holt, JAC	51	722	14.2	0	63
Andre Caldwell, CIN	51	432	8.5	3	24
Joseph Addai, IND	51	336	6.6	3	25
Devery Henderson, NO	51	804	15.8	2	75
John Carlson, SEA	51	574	11.3	7	42
Steven Jackson, STL	51	322	6.3	0	38
Greg Camarillo, MIA	50	552	11.0	0	29
Chris Johnson, TEN	50	503	10.1	2	69
Michael Jenkins, ATL	50	635	12.7	1	50
Antwaan Randle El, WAS	50	530	10.6	0	44
Mike Thomas, JAC	48	453	9.4	1	28
Michael Crabtree, SF	48	625	13.0	2	50
Jeremy Shockey, NO	48	569	11.9	3	66
Fred Davis, WAS	48	509	10.6	6	29
Pierre Garcon, IND	47	765	16.3	4	66
Dwayne Bowe, KC	47	589	12.5	4	41
Nate Washington, TEN	47	569	12.1	6	35
Hakeem Nicks, NYG	47	790	16.8	6	68
Donnie Avery, STL	47	589	12.5	5	50
Reggie Bush, NO	47	335	7.1	3	29
Fred Jackson, BUF	46	371	8.1	2	21
Malcom Floyd, SD	45	776	17.2	1	53
Chris Chambers, SD/KC	45	730	16.2	5	61
Braylon Edwards, CLE/NYJ	45	680	15.1	4	65
Dustin Keller, NYJ	45	522	11.6	2	40
Darren Sproles, SD	45	497	11.0	4	81
Bo Scaife, TEN	45	440	9.8	1	27
Robert Meachem, NO	45	722	16.0	9	54
Johnny Knox, CHI	45	527	11.7	5	68
Deion Branch, SEA	45	437	9.7	2	35
Lee Evans, BUF	44	612	13.9	7	50
Steve Slaton, HOU	44	417	9.5	4	38
Chester Taylor, MIN	44	389	8.8	1	33
Laveranues Coles, CIN	43	514	12.0	5	40
Adrian Peterson, MIN	43	436	10.1	0	63
Danny Amendola, STL	43	326	7.6	1	25
Kenny Britt, TEN	42	701	16.7	3	57

Brees: Athlon Sports; Welker: Rick Stewart/Getty Images; Johnson, Jackson: Peter Brouillet

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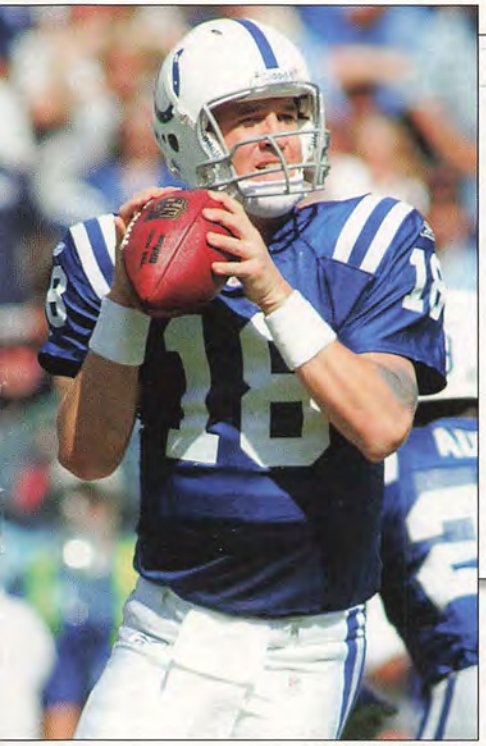
the BACK PAGE

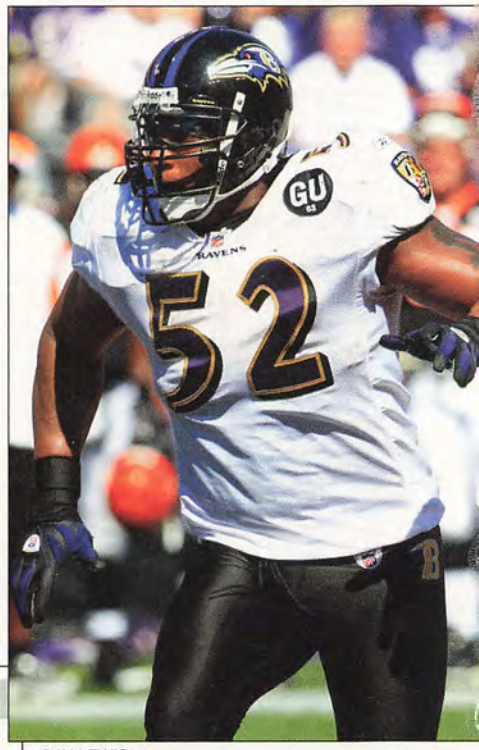
NFL ALL-DECADE TEAM



PEYTON MANNING

OFFENSE

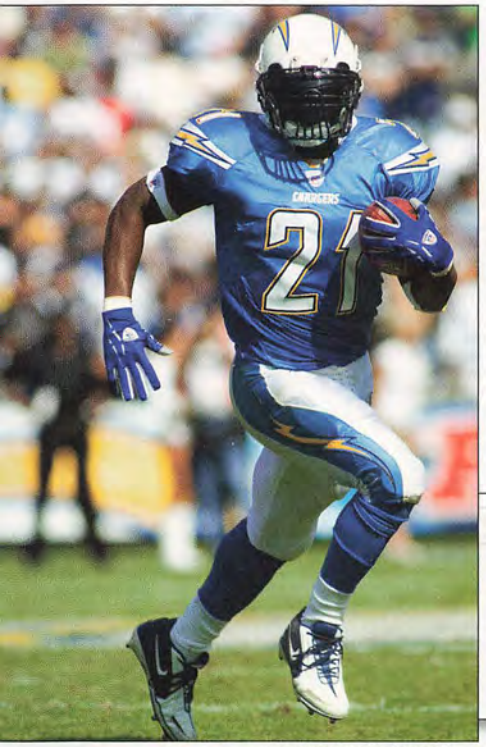
QB	Peyton Manning	Colts
RB	Edgerrin James	Colts, Cardinals, Seahawks
RB	LaDainian Tomlinson	Chargers
WR	Torry Holt	Rams, Jaguars
WR	Randy Moss	Vikings, Raiders, Patriots
TE	Tony Gonzalez	Chiefs, Falcons
T	Walter Jones	Seahawks
T	Jonathan Ogden	Ravens
G	Alan Faneca	Steelers, Jets
G	Steve Hutchinson	Seahawks, Vikings
C	Kevin Mawae	Jets, Titans



RAY LEWIS

DEFENSE

DE	Dwight Freeney	Colts
DE	Jason Taylor	Dolphins, Redskins
DT	Casey Hampton	Steelers
DT	Kevin Williams	Vikings
LB	Derrick Brooks	Bucs
LB	Ray Lewis	Ravens
LB	Brian Urlacher	Bears
CB	Champ Bailey	Redskins, Broncos
CB	Ronde Barber	Bucs
S	Ed Reed	Ravens
S	Darren Sharper	Packers, Vikings, Saints

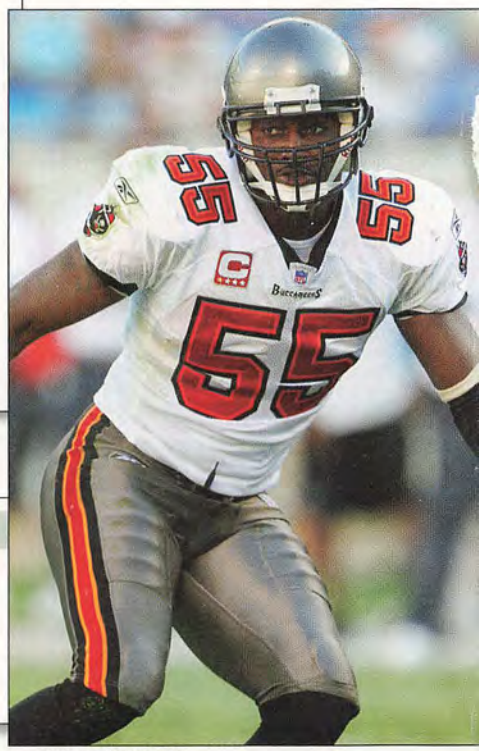


LADAINIAN TOMLINSON

SPECIALISTS

K	Adam Vinatieri	Patriots, Colts
P	Shane Lechler	Raiders
KR	Josh Cribbs	Browns
PR	Dante Hall	Chiefs, Rams

Manning: Tim Clark/Athlon Sports; Tomlinson: Peter Brouillet; Lewis, Brooks: Bruce Schwartzman



DERRICK BROOKS

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